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WHY I BELIEVE IN *Personal Immortality*

By SIR OLIVER LODGE

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WHY I BELIEVE IN PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

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BY

SIR OLIVER LODGE

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FOREWORD

ARGUMENTS in favour of human survival, or that death is mainly a bodily transaction, are as old as humanity. One set of arguments may be classed as Theological, being based on the postulate of the goodness and reasonableness of a Creator; while another set, which might be called anthropological, is based on man's instinctive revulsion from the idea of annihilation, and on the postulate that evolved instincts must have some correspondence with reality. In this book I do not stress either of these arguments, though I respect them. I do not really wish to argue at all. My whole contention rests on a basis of experience, and on acceptance of a class of facts which can be verified at first hand by others if they take the trouble. I know how weighty the word "fact" is in science, and I say without hesitation that individual personal continuance is to me a demonstrated fact. This conviction has been reached through a study of obscure human faculty not yet recognized by orthodox science, and apparently not approved as a rule by Theologians. It is permissible therefore, and perhaps even obligatory, to give from time to time some excuse or apologia for my steady perseverance in the enquiry and my assured conviction about the results.

Incidentally it is clear that the word *Immortality*

in the title is used in its conventional significance, for no assertion about infinity can come within our scope. Survival of personality is all that we can hope to establish. The real step or apparent breach of continuity in human life is taken at the grave and gate of death. If we survive that wrenching experience, it is hardly likely that we shall encounter and succumb to some other discontinuity of still greater magnitude; but of further adventures in the future we know nothing. All that we have evidence for concerns our individual continuance after separation from this material body: what lies in the dim and distant future it would be presumptuous to pretend to know. Truly that is a morrow for which we need at present take no thought. Sufficient, here and now, is the knowledge that this present life is not the end of existence for us as individuals; and, further, that if we use it rightly it is the early stage of a long-continued opportunity for ever-increasing service—the kind of service which is in harmony with our true nature and is therefore equivalent to perfect freedom. *In la sua volontade è nostra pace.*

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WHY I BELIEVE IN PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

CHAPTER I

A COSMIC VIEW OF LIFE AND MIND

> What distinguishes religion from ethics is the belief in another world and the endeavour to hold intercourse with it.
>
> (The late Father George Tyrrell in the *Quarterly Review* for July, 1909, in the course of a review of certain orthodox religious works.)

For by far the greater part of its history mankind has been effectively aware only of the earth, and has regarded it as the sole world in existence, the host of heaven being treated as subordinate appendages to this world for the purpose of giving it light and surrounding it with objects of interest. (A greater light to rule the day and a lesser light to rule the night. He made the stars also.) A few gleams of wider knowledge came through to antiquity.

Supersensual regions, under or above the earth's surface, were treated of in both classical and mediæval poetry, but always in close relation and subservience to the earth. Not till some centuries after Copernicus (A.D. 1500) did the idea that the earth was a heavenly body, one among a multitude of others, penetrate to the ordinary intelligence. Not till comparatively recent times were the ideas of man enlarged generally from a mainly terrene to a cosmic view. The great revolution in man's thoughts has now fairly been accomplished, and everyone admits the independent existence of a multitude of other worlds, so far as their material constitution and movements in space are concerned. Let us hope that along with this material expansion we shall ultimately recapture the spiritual insight and enthusiasm of the Middle Ages which built Chartres and other cathedrals. Lost though that insight was in more recent centuries, it may yet be recoverable; with added knowledge of the material, and with renewed sense of the spiritual, order of existence. It is not for nothing that the Liverpool Cathedral, with its breadth and grandeur, has been built by

civic enterprise in this twentieth century of danger, conflict, and turmoil.

Notwithstanding the material expansion, and in spite of exceptions here and there, it is surely true that when we leave material considerations and attend to the mental and spiritual domain, we find something like the old kind of limitation to earth still persistent. No life or mind is known to science beyond the boundaries of this planet; and our systems of thought are constructed on that basis. In psychology man is treated as the only, or by far the highest, intelligent being. Lower intelligences, and friendly intercourse with them, are perforce admitted, in the rest of the animal creation, but the existence of any intelligences higher than man is for the most part ignored or sometimes denied; while any attempt to hold intercourse or enter into relations with such hypothetical intelligences, in order to learn more about them or even definitely to verify their existence, is reprobated as superstition unworthy of science.

At the same time there are evidences of unusual and perturbing phenomena, which suggest that this

kind of pre-Copernican limitation to earthly life and conduct, this lack of interest or belief in anything beyond, is a narrowing down of what might be our outlook on existence, and is far from being ultimately and finally satisfactory. For in order to maintain the isolation hypothesis complete and compact, it is necessary resolutely to turn one's back upon certain asserted facts, to attribute them all without discrimination to fraud, and to deny their genuine reality.

Moreover, it must be remembered that the instincts of mankind have only slightly been controlled or governed or restricted by scientific considerations. Human life is guided much more by emotion and instinct than by logical reasoning; and everywhere the instinct of man has led him, indistinctly and even superstitiously, to postulate the existence of Higher Powers, which in some way control his destiny, and which by ceremonies can be either propitiated or offended. Whether those Higher Powers are distributed among many intelligences, or whether they are entirely the prerogative of One, is comparatively a detail. And concern-

ing the attributes of that One there has been a great variety of doctrine, and much gradual growth towards an improved and still improving view. The aspirations and highest ideals of existing humanity, at the stage which it had at any time attained, are reflected in its notions of Deity; the power of worthy conception being necessarily limited by moral and intellectual development. The animal, if it worships at all, can only worship man, its visible and tangible superior. Man has risen to the worship of something supersensuous, and is able to embody his symbolic interpretation of the Universe in images and other forms of art. Christianity has illuminated our perception of the Divine by glorifying the idea of Incarnation.

But whatever variety there may be, and however lofty some of our conceptions, it is undoubtedly true, as Father Tyrrell says, that the essence of religion is the belief in another world, another order of existence, and the endeavour to hold intercourse with it. To this universal tendency our churches and chapels, and the services of prayer and praise which go on in them, bear eloquent witness. The pre-

amble of all religions is the existence of a spiritual world; that is, of intelligences and beings far higher than man. And when their existence is not only admitted, but when it is felt that they can influence and assist our lives, when it is felt possible to enter into communion with them, to send up petitions and derive help from them, then the belief becomes something more than intellectual, and blossoms into some more or less worthy form of religion.

To the whole of this tendency towards the supernormal, and what might properly be called the miraculous, scientific men, being human as well as scientific, have reacted individually and diversely. Some of them go so far as to despise and condemn these reachings out beyond real knowledge; others accept them humbly as part of the human inheritance, without presuming to formulate and comprehend them; while the majority, though looking at the behaviour of religious people with a respectful and perhaps compassionate eye, treat these things as alien to their professional and intellectual pursuits, and, without actively denying, take no particular interest in them.

The extreme group of scientific men who claim to be also philosophers, and who survey existence from what may briefly be called the materialistic or sensory point of view, are not lacking in either eloquence or enthusiasm; they are quite prepared to be dogmatic in support of their chilly but robust philosophy. They joy in their emancipation from religious tradition; they call upon others to share their bold rejection of popular sources of comfort; they exhibit a stoical calm amid what to others would seem like ruin and desolation. I cite in illustration a passage from an essay called "A Free Man's Worship," by Mr. Bertrand Russell, F.R.S.; many less eloquent expressions of faith by other writers might equally well be quoted, to the same general effect:

> That man is the product of causes which had no prevision of the end they were achieving; that his origin, his growth, his hopes and fears, his loves and his beliefs, are but the outcome of accidental collocations of atoms; that no fire, no heroism, no intensity of thought and feeling, can preserve an individual life beyond the grave; that all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the

> noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction in the vast death of the solar system, and that the whole temple of man's achievement must inevitably be buried beneath the débris of a universe in ruins—all these things, if not quite beyond dispute, are yet so nearly certain that no philosophy which rejects them can hope to stand. Only within the scaffolding of these truths, only on the firm foundation of unyielding despair, can the soul's habitation henceforth be safely built.

There is a ring of conviction in this counsel of assured despair which is almost triumphant. It may be like a battle-song to sustain the fighter's spirits, but it is far removed from that sad contemplation of human destiny which sometimes afflicted the ancient poets. Virgil, for instance, is thus apostrophized by Tennyson:

> Thou that seest Universal Nature moved by Universal Mind;
> Thou majestic in thy sadness at the doubtful doom of human kind.

In the modern agnostic this sad acquiescence has been replaced by something more like exultation,

for the doom apparently is no longer doubtful. If this were the truth, one could but admire the stoicism, and at the same time wonder at the energy devoted to the service of a perishing race. The only reason I join issue with such an ethical philosophy is because, however admirable in itself, I firmly believe its main foundation to be scientifically unsound. The agnostic of last century sometimes ceased to be purely agnostic, and, like the late W. K. Clifford, gave vent to an exuberant denial of any spiritual or supersensuous existence—a negative faith shared by a good many people of the present day, including patrons of that amusingly cocksure and not over-modest periodical *The Freethinker*. These pride themselves on what they seriously consider, not their limited outlook, but their freedom of thought:

> The universe is made of ether and atoms, and there is no room for ghosts.

Speculative negations of this comprehensive kind might have been confirmed by further knowledge and become the verdict of science. But it so happens

that gradually, of late years, first one and then another of men whose lives are devoted to the study of science have had their attention called to strange and unusual phenomena, which by many are asserted to demonstrate the existence of an unseen supernormal and presumably spiritual world—a world of immaterial and yet individual realities, as F. W. H. Myers called it. After long study of these phenomena some of us have come to the conclusion, not without a vivid sense of responsibility, that their claim to reality is valid, and that they find their easiest explanation by aid of the working hypothesis that our existence is not so limited to the earth and to terrestrial affairs as we thought it was, but that we are related to and in touch with another order of existence, and that our view even of mental phenomena must expand and become cosmic and universal. In other words, that the phenomena cannot be explained if we limit ourselves to the ordinary normal experiences of terrestrial life.

Another Copernican revolution is thus in progress: the earth, including any other planets that are like the earth, is turning out to be not the sole

abode of intelligence. Indeed, I am beginning to think, not merely from the intuitions of religion, but from the somewhat obscure indications of an enlarged though only nascent science, that Intelligence is not limited to the surface of planetary masses, but pervades and dominates space; nowhere absent, everywhere active. In other words, that the essence of life and mind possibly or probably inhabits the ether, if it needs a physical vehicle, and is only exceptionally and temporarily incarnate in matter, here and there, when circumstances are favourable and the singularly difficult and exceptional conditions are supplied.

For it would seem that incarnate life, as we know it, needs the complex substance that we call "protoplasm" for its habitation; and this complex molecular aggregate can only form, indeed some of the atoms of which it is composed can only form, at a moderately low temperature: whereas we know that by far the greater part of the matter in the universe is at a high and blazing temperature. And even among those masses that have cooled down, many are too small to hold an atmosphere. It is quite ex-

ceptional for a body to be large enough to retain gases on its surface by gravity, and yet not so large as to retain or generate too much heat. To sustain life, a planet must not be too cold, so that water is solid, and must not be too hot, so that water is steam. There must be just the special grades of temperature that we find on the earth, for water to be liquid and for protoplasm to exist.

Here on the earth we find life distinctly and obviously associated with matter, wherever possible, and not otherwise. In the higher creatures, and in ourselves, we find life blossoming into intelligence. So we have, curiously though after all naturally enough, come to the tacit conclusion that life and mind can only exist in association with matter; and when in ordinary course the material vehicle of life wears out and is discarded, we are apt to conclude that the emancipated life and intelligence must necessarily have gone out of existence, and can no longer be.

Whereas the wonder is, not that they survive their material embodiment, but that they could ever be incorporated with matter at all. For what I have

come to accept as the probable truth, so far as I can perceive it, is that the association of life and mind with matter is an exceptional thing, and that they are really more at home in the interplanetary cosmic region, which the orthodox sciences—psychological as well as biological—have so far in the main ignored.

I admit the need for a bodily vehicle of some kind for the practical functioning of intelligence, but I do not suppose that the body need be composed only of the assemblage of opposite electric charges that we are accustomed to call "matter." That seems to me an unfounded and gratuitous assumption, like many other assumptions that recent scientific theories (especially the so-called Relativity doctrines) have led us to discard. I can imagine another structure composed of ether, just as solid and substantial as ordinary matter is, but differing from it in making no appeal to our present animal sense-organs, and in being unamenable to direct muscular control. The discrete particles which compose any ordinary block of matter are held together by the uniting forces of cohesion, chemical affinity, and gravitation; and these immaterial forces or strains are more

and more being recognized as functions of the ether of space. The body of matter which we see and handle is in no case the whole body, it must have an etheric counterpart to hold it together; and it is this etheric counterpart which in the case of living beings is, I suspect, truly animated. In my view, life and mind are never directly associated with matter; and they are only indirectly enabled to act upon it through their more direct connection with an etheric vehicle which constitutes their real instrument, an ether body which does interact with them and does operate on matter.

The matter particles put together by the etheric body are constantly changing, they are adventitious and temporary, they are sometimes troublesome or morbid; and ultimately the material body decays. Matter has many imperfections. But ether has never shown any sign of the least imperfection; it is absolutely transparent, it dissipates no energy, and any structure composed of ether is likely to be permanent. An etheric body we possess now, independent of accidents that may happen to its sensory aggregate of associated matter, and that etheric body we shall

continue to possess, long after the material portion is discarded. The only difficulty of realizing this is because nothing etheric affects our present senses; everything about the ether, even in physics, has to be inferred. Direct observation seems hopeless. We may be living in a permanent invulnerable tractable etheric body of which we know nothing; for it interpenetrates, or is cased over by, an assemblage of vibrating material particles which constantly stimulate our nerves and attract all our attention.

This, briefly and hastily summarized, is the conclusion at which I have gradually arrived, and it remains to indicate in a general way the sort of basis of experience on which it rests, and some of the implications that are involved in it. I cannot now go into modern arguments about the ether and its philosophical necessity for the understanding and exposition of all phenomena, except when they are treated in merely abstract fashion so as to leave the mathematical equations without physical interpretation; but I will try to summarize the general position which scrutiny of the facts has led me to take up, and then run through the story of some of those

facts so far as they have come within my ken. It may seem rather a hind-before plan, thus to recite deductions before treating of the kind of facts on which they are based. But a working hypothesis is always a help, like a thread on which beads can be strung, and without some sort of clue we may be left wandering in a maze without cognizance of our bearings. If a hypothesis is out of harmony with truth it will have to be modified or discarded. Of course: but meanwhile it may have served its turn; and the way to ascertain its weak points is to test it. A theory must be confronted with facts of observation and experiment. It should be given a fair chance of survival; it need only be ruthlessly exterminated when it has proved a false and misleading guide. The following, then, are my theses which at present I wish to uphold.

SUMMARY OF POSTULATES OR PROVISIONAL CONCLUSIONS DERIVED FROM EXPERIENCE AND NUMBERED FOR REFERENCE

(1) That the activity of mind is not limited to its bodily manifestations, though it is true that some material mechanism is necessary to display its activity to us here and now.

(2) That the brain-nerve-muscle mechanism, with the rest of the material body, constitutes an instrument, which is constructed, controlled, and utilized, by life and mind; an instrument which may become impaired or worn out, so as to prevent its successful manipulation by the normal controlling entity; and that the signs of that dislocation or impairment may become conspicuous without entitling us to draw any conclusion other than that the channel or link between mind and matter has become clogged or imperfect.

(3) That neither life nor mind go out of existence when separated from their material organ or instrument: they merely cease to function in the

material sphere after the same fashion as they were able to when the instrument was in good order.

(The fact is, that nothing real goes out of existence, but merely changes its form. Things may readily go out of our ken, and become imperceptible to our senses; but that does not prove that they have ceased to be. This, which is conspicuously true of matter and energy, is, in my view, true also of vital and spiritual existence. We have no ground for assuming that anything real can cease to exist, though it may readily be dispersed or otherwise rendered inaccessible.)

(4) That what we call "an individual" is a definite incarnation, or association with matter, of some vital or spiritual element, which itself has a continuous existence. Identity, or in its higher developments Personality, certainly does not depend on the identity of the material particles which display it; it can only be an attribute of the controlling entity which put those particles together for a time; for that is known to be able to discard and renew them, in the ordinary course of life, without its own continuity being thereby in the least affected.

(5) That the *value* of incarnation lies in the opportunity thus afforded for individualizing a specific and gradually increasing portion of mentality, so as to isolate it and screen it from its pristine cosmic surroundings, and enable it to develop a personality which shall be characteristic of that particular organism.

(6) That when such an individuality or personality is real, there is every reason to suppose that, like all other real entities, it must persist, and may thus survive the separation from the material organism which helped to isolate it and make its individual characteristics or "character" possible.

Whether the individual character thus formed *does* persist as an individual, carrying with it the memory and experience and affections which have been formed under the opportunities and privileges associated with the matter body during earth life, is a question which must be answered by direct observation and experience. So finally my conviction is:

(7) That the evidence already attainable suffices to prove that individual character and memory do

persist; that the personalities that have departed this life continue, with the knowledge and experience which they have gained here; and that under certain partially known conditions our dead friends are able to demonstrate to us their real and individual personal survival.

Present Position of These Theses

Now all these conclusions, or deductions from a long course of inquiry, are looked at askance by orthodox science, which hitherto has been limited to terrestrial manifestations without postulating the existence of anything beyond; and any insistence upon such propositions tends to be derided as speculation or even as superstition. Moreover, they do not seem essential even to religion as generally understood, and for the most part they are deprecated as unnecessary by religious teachers. Accordingly it may be asked why I and some others are so impressed with the truth and vital importance of these doctrines that we are willing to undergo the obloquy or derision which inevitably attaches to their supporters, and why we think it our duty to advocate

these or similar theses as truths to be reverently considered and gradually improved in presentation as knowledge and experience grow. That question is what I wish to answer in this book, so far as it can be answered briefly; though the real answer involves a study of the facts recorded in a mass of literature extending at the very least over half a century. Really extending over much more; for ancient literature is full of such facts, however inadequately or unscientifically recorded. The evidence for them is daily growing in volume, and will grow more rapidly when the ban of contemptuous criticism is lightened, and when simple testimony is freed from militant suppression.

CHAPTER II

THE SEVEN PROPOSITIONS

This main-miracle, that thou art thou,
With power on thine own act and on the world.

. . . . . .

From that true world within the world we see,
Whereof our world is but the bounding shore.

TENNYSON.

LET us take the propositions at the end of last chapter and proceed to discuss or elaborate them.

I

First, that mind can act independently of the bodily organs. I became convinced of this in or about the year 1883, from the facts of experimental telepathy, which had previously been called attention to by Sir William Barrett, in a Paper read to the British Association in 1876. Experimental telepathy,

as everyone now knows, is the communication of an idea or a picture or a sensation, from one living mind to another, without using the material sense organs. Two people are involved, the agent and the percipient. The percipient or receiver is screened from any sensory perception, while the agent or transmitter thinks of something, or looks at an object, or otherwise tries to keep before his mind some notion that he wants to transmit mentally. Under careful conditions it was found that certain persons had a percipient faculty, so that, after a certain moderate interval of quiescence, they could get the idea, or were able to draw the object looked at by the agent, without the use of either hearing, sight, or touch. This fact, thus critically established by many observers, was then made use of to explain a great number of instances of otherwise inexplicable occurrences, which now seemed likely to be due to the spontaneous utilization of this telepathic faculty, whether consciously or not, under the stress of strong emotion. By thus applying this nearest approach to a *vera causa* available, it was hoped to eliminate superstition and rationally to account for numerous

legends and contemporary assertions, to the effect that one person had received from another at a distance an impression of illness, danger, or death. It is well known that such experiences often take the form of a vision or phantasmal appearance; and we assumed that the mental impression in such cases was so strong and vivid as to call up in the mind of the percipient an hallucination of an auditory or visual character; so that mentally, and not physically, words were heard or a vision seen, not through any normal channel, and not due to any objective presence, but as a sort of mental reconstruction. The impression in the best and only important cases was, however, what we call veridical; that is to say it did really correspond with events occurring elsewhere, so that after inquiry it was found capable of verification.

This was the outcome of a carefully compiled two-volume book published in 1886 under the title "Phantasms of the Living," by Myers and Gurney with the co-operation of Mr. Podmore. Thereby a great number of mysterious occurrences which had

been testified to, and which are still occurring to people in all parts of the world, were rationalized and as far as possible accounted for, on the basis of the observed fact of physical communion discovered by means of experimental telepathy. The phantom or apparition seen by the sensitive percipient, which heretofore had been naturally regarded as due to some real presence of a mysterious kind, could thus be reasonably reduced to a vivid mental impression produced by telepathy unconsciously exerted by the distant person who was at that time in distress or danger or, it might be, at the point of death.

A great number of such cases were subsequently collected and scrutinized by skilled and most careful investigators, in what was called "A Census of Hallucinations"; a laborious enterprise carried out up to and during 1894, and frankly including, now, phantoms not only of the living but also of the dead. After all doubtful cases had been eliminated, all weak points allowed for, and every chance granted to any more normal view that could be suggested,

the weighty conclusion of these investigators was thus summarized at the end of the volume[1]:

> Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold as a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be attempted in this paper—nor perhaps exhausted in this age.

This long and exceedingly conscientious report was signed by Professor and Mrs. Henry Sidgwick and others. Whether the hypothesis of telepathy from agent to percipient actually is the full explanation of these experiences, I do not presume to dogmatize. I think that there may be other and supplementary explanations—other causes at work. But at any rate the hypothesis of telepathy between the persons concerned is the simplest and most rational; in other words, the very minimum or unusual or supernormal explanation that can be formulated, to account for the established facts.

It is of interest to remember that the great philosopher Kant was at one time keenly interested in psychical subjects; and he even investigated one or

[1] *Proceedings* S.P.R., Vol. X, p. 394.

two remarkable cases, especially connected with Swedenborg; though subsequently his interest waned. The late Professor William Wallace in an essay on Kant called attention to the possibly subjective view that may be taken of apparitions, and concludes with a quotation from Kant which is plainly akin to the telepathic explanation suggested so much later by Myers and Gurney in their book "Phantasms of the Living"; wherein they specially emphasized the fact that some such visions, however originating, are veridical, and therefore may have more importance than Kant was inclined to attribute to them. Here is the quotation from Kant and Wallace:

> The possibility of any communication between pure spirit and its matter-clad kinsman depends on establishing a connection between abstract spiritual ideas, and cognate images which awake analogous or symbolical conceptions of a sensuous kind. Such associations are found in persons of peculiar temperament. At certain times such seers are assailed by apparitions, which, however, are not, as they suppose, spiritual natures, but only an illusion of the imagination, which substitutes its pictures for the

real spiritual influences, imperceptible to the gross human soul. Thus departed souls and pure spirits, tho' they can never produce an impression upon our outward senses, or stand in community with matter, can still act upon the soul of man, which, like them, belongs to a great spiritual commonwealth. For the ideas they excite in the soul clothe themselves according to the law of fantasy in allied imagery, and create outside the seer the apparition of the objects to which they are appropriate.

2

Clause Two—that the body is an instrument—is largely consequent or dependent on Clause One, and is intended to meet and controvert the argument frequently adduced by anatomists and physiologists that the brain and the mind are identical, so that an injury to the brain means *ipso facto* a corresponding injury to the mind, and that the destruction of the one means the destruction of the other. This hypothesis may be regarded as the basis of materialistic philosophy, and is a proposition evidently concordant with the common experience that a surgical injury to the brain involves a correspond-

ing mental defect. Needless to say, all these facts of common observation are by me fully admitted; but I claim that the deduction suggested by and commonly drawn from the facts oversteps what is legitimate. All that is really proven is that when the instrument is damaged, the power of displaying mental activity is damaged too—which is only common-sense. But from this undoubted fact we have no right to deduce anything at all about what has happened to the mind, unless we gratuitously assume that the brain and mind are identical. If the brain ceases to work, we naturally get no communication: the manifestation of mind, through the working of the mechanism, has ceased. Possibly aphasia has set in: ideas can no longer be expressed in words if the speech-centres are injured. Past occurrences can no longer be brought out of the memory if the cells of the brain or their communicating fibres are prevented from activating the muscles either of the hand or larynx. But to say that the memory itself is wiped out, because its organ of reproduction is unable to function, is to go beyond any deduction that we are entitled to make. Those who hold that the

brain is not merely the instrument of mind, but is the mind itself, must inevitably be willing to make the strange gratuitous and intrinsically absurd assumption that the mass of matter inside the skull is able to think and design, to look before and after, to plan works of literature and art, to conceive great poems, to explore the mechanism of the universe, to feel sorrow and affection, to initiate and determine on a course of action, and generally not only to display, but really to feel, the sentiments associated with the words—Faith, Hope, and Love.

Whereas it ought to be admitted that the brain does not really even see, any more than the eye does. The eye and the brain together are an instrument through which seeing is rendered possible. The ear is conspicuously a physical instrument by means of which we hear. But surely it is really the mind that both sees and hears, and interprets the meaning of the seeing and hearing, and extracts from pictures, poems, and music, a mental impression and emotion —a psychic response altogether foreign to any of the attributes of matter. The sense of beauty, for instance, can be aroused by an assemblage of material

particles, but no assemblage of material particles can admire its own beauty. Nor can a piece of matter, however animated, be reasonably supposed capable of initiating a course of action, of designing a work of art or a scientific theory, or indeed of any spontaneous action whatever. Particles of matter are completely subservient to the mechanical forces which act upon them: they neither initiate nor rebel, they are absolutely and completely docile. And this is true of the atoms of organic matter just as much as of the inorganic; for the whole tendency of science has been to break down the distinction on the material side between organic and inorganic, and to emphasize the fact that, however exceptionally organisms behave, the particles themselves are completely obedient to the laws of physics and chemistry, and can only display vital and mental phenomena by being subject to vital and mental control.

I find a simple statement of this issue in a work by the Polish philosopher Professor Wincenty Lutoslawski, called "The World of Souls." This book was apparently written in 1899, though not published in England till 1924, and is not so well known

as it might be, in spite of a forcible commendation by William James. The passage runs thus:

> To understand the relation of thought and brain it will be sufficient to admit that the brain is the organ through which we receive all impressions from without, and through which we produce all movements, specially the movements of speech. All evidence tends to exhibit merely these functions of the brain, and every assertion crediting the brain with thought is based on a fallacy similar to that which refers to the heart all emotions for the reason that emotions influence the action of the heart. . . . Thus thought is known to us, not as a physiological process, but as an act of consciousness, from our own mental experience, and we have no reason to identify it with any bodily activity observable. . . . Nothing else than what you are conscious of as yourself is your soul. It is a wrong analogy of language which leads us to say, "My soul," as we say "My body," "My brain," etc. In fact you *are* a soul, and you ought not to speak of having a soul as if the soul were different from yourself.

3

Clause Three, which implies that things which go out of our ken do not go out of existence, can be

illustrated by many familiar phenomena. The indestructibility of matter is not an obvious fact: it had to be ascertained and proven by scientific inquiry. The common idea is that a thing burnt is destroyed, that milk spilt upon the ground is lost, that a cloud which evaporates in the heat of the sun has ceased to be. But everyone now knows that however dispersed a piece of matter can be, its particles are indestructible, that there is just as much aqueous vapour, however invisible, as there was when the cloud was a conspicuous object to our eyes. There is no need to argue or emphasize this further.

But it may be said that this admission militates against individual survival. Superficially yes, but really not in the least. The cloud had no individuality: it was merely an assemblage of particles, which happened so to affect the rays of light as to be perceived by our eyes: it has no more identity than any other assemblage. A crowd may be dispersed, or an army disbanded: historically they had a corporate existence, and were then scattered. The reality of its existence while it lasted was not in the grouping, but in the mental stimulus which called the unit to-

gether: each constituent of the crowd went about its own business: there is nothing essential or permanent about mere juxtaposition. An Army or Fleet is obedient to orders, conceived perhaps by statesmen in London or Washington and then communicated through the proper officers. Its members are like the particles of our own bodies which have been put together by some dominant agency, and are obedient to orders for a time, until they are disbanded. As a body they cease to be; but the controlling entity which ordered and arranged them has no part or lot in them: they were the instrument through which it acted and produced certain effects; the controlling power can continue to function long after its subservient mechanism has been discarded.

But without an instrument it cannot function. Not even the Deity produces results except by employing the proper means. The Psychical and the Physical seem continually blended. Briefly it must always be true that God acts through agents. What we call the laws of nature are our formulation and recognition of some of His agents. Theologians have surmised that angels and other lofty beings are

among the agents and messengers; while that some things can only be done by mankind is a familiar truth. Man is an instrument of higher powers, just as man himself needs an instrument through which to exercise and display his faculties. And as the maker of instruments may rejoice when a master uses them to good purpose, so may the Highest rejoice in the beneficent use made of faculties and talents. As says George Eliot,

> When any Master holds 'twixt hand and chin
> A violin of mine, he will be glad
> That Stradivari lived, made violins
> And made them of the best.
> For while God gave the skill,
> I gave them instruments to play upon,
> God using me to help Him. . . .
> He could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins
> Without Antonio.

4

Clause Four—that an individual is a temporary incarnation of something permanent—concerns the more difficult problem of personal identity. What do we mean by an individual personality? Need we

assume that that individual has always existed? If a thing is to continue, need it pre-exist? On the whole we may realize that this is not necessary, though there are some whose thought tends in that direction. A poem or drama may be immortal, but it originated at a definite time; special circumstances brought it into being.

To me, at present, it seems likely that the individuality is formed during the isolation in matter in what may be called, by analogy, raw psychic material. The psyche or unidentified soul gradually leaks into the body as the body is fitted to receive it, beginning with an infinitesimal portion in its early stages, and gradually growing in amount up to a certain measure, dependent on the individual's own exertions and opportunities. Occasionally the influx is such as to form what we call "a great man," though in the majority of cases it stops far short of that. After an interval for development, the now identified soul goes back whence it came, either gradually, in the natural course of things, or suddenly if a catastrophe happens, but in either case retaining the powers, aptitudes, tastes, memory, and

experience attained during incarnate life. That increase of value it carries with it and contributes to the Whole, whatever the appropriate Whole which it rejoins may be—perhaps a larger or subliminal self, parts of which may possibly be liable to some modified form of reincarnation hereafter. On those questions I withhold judgment. But of this we may be sure, that the temporarily accreted material particles have done their part and are left behind; they were themselves always quite subordinate to the uses to which they were put. There is no personal identity about the substance of the body: its particles are collected from food of any kind, they are assimilated for a time, and are continually being discarded so as to give place to others. No sort of control is exercised by the particles; they are pushed hither and thither and are in a constant state of flux, but the whole organism preserves its identity. Somewhat as a river preserves its identity, and remains the Ganges or the Tiber, though the water particles are continually changing and merely pass through it. Analogies are by no means complete, they are merely suggestive. A poem, once recited, does not

cease. An orchestral performance is a temporary incarnation of the ideas of a genius, and is liable to reincarnation. This proves nothing: it is a mere illustration.

5

Clause Five implies that terrestrial incarnation is of value; and we can partly see why. The individual appears to us through his bodily manifestation, and common experience shows that an individual is thus to a great extent isolated from his fellows, and has in any case to live his own life and develop his own character as best he can; at the same time encountering others in like case and having an opportunity of making friends. The material body is a psychic screen, but a physical uniter: we encounter people—in the street, so to speak—whom we should never otherwise have met. Through our bodily mechanism we can learn about historical characters and even about those who only live in literature. The body is a fine instrument for education.

The brain-nerve-muscle mechanism, which con-

stitutes a human being on the material side, is fairly complete in itself, and normally is only open to outside influence through its sense-organs. Thus it becomes conscious of an external world, and of other individuals in a similar condition to itself, from whom it can gain instruction by physical methods of communication, and with whom it can co-operate in learning something about the universe, of which it constitutes an individualized portion. It is quite exceptional for a person to have telepathic or direct connection with other people, or to receive direct inspiration. Experience is limited for the most part to information received through physical channels, largely by means of a code of symbols called language, which we have to learn from others and gradually gain the power of interpreting. Learning of every kind is a matter of some difficulty, and requires an effort: yet without instruction and effort our information would be very limited. The special organs of sense are as it were the windows through which the soul looks on the universe, and by means of which it gradually gathers relevant information. Matter is in that way helpful, and yet it somehow

seems an alien thing, which has to be energetically moulded and manipulated, so as to express as well as to receive ideas. A certain amount of effort is needed even for the sustenance and continuance of the material body. The difficulties thus met with are part of the soul's training; the value of the individual character depends on the success with which the special conditions are utilized, and the wisdom with which they are employed. The episode of earth life is therefore of great value in developing character, in enlarging knowledge, in cultivating new friendships, and generally adding to the richness of life.

6

Clause Six is to the effect that realities are permanent and are not dependent on the material vehicles that display and assist and make possible our apprehension of them. Incarnation isolated psychic units are provided with sense-organs whereby some communication with the rest of the universe is preserved. But we can bethink ourselves that our special senses are very limited in their scope; they originated low down in the animal kingdom, to

enable the organism to gain its food, escape its enemies, and avoid other dangers which surround it. Only in the higher creatures are these channels of information used not merely for these mundane purposes but for scientific and philosophic study. Yet we know that by us facts are not merely noticed and remembered, after animal fashion; they are classified, generalized, and speculated upon; inferences are drawn, and knowledge is systematized, in a way which goes far beyond what could naturally be expected as derivable from the mere contacts and vibrations that are all that we really receive from the material universe.

I will deal with deductions from our senses in Chapter V. All that we need realize now is that of the Universe as a whole, in its wider content, our senses tell us little or nothing directly. They limit us to the perception of matter. We do not really perceive even vibrations: we perceive only the sounding or luminous or illuminated bodies whence they come. That is why "matter" looms so large in our thoughts, and why some people are tempted to imagine that nothing else exists. That is why we find

it so difficult to believe that there is a universe of life and mind and thought and aspiration, apart from the material aggregates which are temporarily actuated by these things, and through which alone they make any direct appeal to our bodily senses.

When we go beyond direct sensation we have to exercise our imagination and make images, mental images, or what in scientific phraseology are sometimes called "models," though that term in this connection has a purely technical significance. The physicist is always imagining analogies or working models, when he leaves the safe ground of his equations. This is the way he conceives or makes mental pictures of the imperceptible, even perhaps of the fourth dimension. This is how he follows the intricacies of the structure of the atom, the behaviour of electrons, the nature of radiation, and indeed of everything connected with the impalpable ether of space. The physicist may fail to form clear satisfactory images, and throughout the nineteenth century he did to some extent fail. The key or clue to his problem was only begun to be put into his hands in the twentieth century. But even throughout the

nineteenth century the chemist used this imaginative method in order to arrive at the composition of the molecules of nearly all the substances with which he has to do, entering into great and remarkable detail, some of which is now being confirmed by the progress of physics. To the imagination of the physicist the distribution of a few spots on a photographic plate, exposed to X-rays through a crystal, speaks volumes.

This again is the only way in which, on a higher and more mysterious level, human beings can hope to deal with the mysteries of religion and to construct a Theology. Sensory apprehension must be aided, and indeed can only be rendered possible, by images. The unseen must be illustrated and made accessible by the seen. Imagination must have a core or nucleus of sensory perception in order to be clear and distinct. If this process is pushed too far, there lurk dangers in it; and the dangers have caused one school of thought to fight shy of it, to deprecate the process. We must, however, beware of confusing the image with the idol. True imagery is not idolatry, it is Vision. To comprehend spiritual things

imagery is essential: it is a kind of embodiment, it is a glorification of the material; it rises to its height in incarnation. And if matter becomes transfigured during an Incarnation *in excelsis*, we need not be surprised; for to permit or render possible incarnation is the highest function of matter, its apotheosis. That is its glory and main purpose. By accepting "form" it can manifest the eternal. "For Soule is forme and doth the bodie make." The body is constructed to enshrine and aid the soul, and then the soul can reflect; in times of serenity it can reflect even God. This I take to be the meaning of a poem just written by my son, where the body is depicted as a house or tabernacle, the home or shrine of the mind, which is presented as a chalice or cup, whose liquid contents when placid and serene can reflect reality, however distant and bright:

THE HOUSE AND THE CUP

O body which art free and kind
Be a clean house to hold the mind.
And mind make fair thy rounded bowl
A clean cup to receive the soul.

O soul be still, reflect the far
Clear image of the Evening Star.

O. W. F. L.

It is by the exercise of our faculty of imagination that we form theories and grasp the underlying reality in even the commonest thing. We are constantly inferring the reality or substratum or entity that we only apprehend indirectly. From electricity and magnetism upwards. Magnetism for instance is only known to us from the odd movements or behaviour of certain substances; yet everyone admits the existence of a magnetic field *in vacuo*, and the theoretical development of the science is immense. Light, too, is quite independent of matter, once it has been brought into existence; and apart from matter its existence would not cease. Nothing jumps out of existence. Everything is only transformed. Realities are permanent.

But just as light is independent of matter except in so far as it is absorbed or generated by its atoms —just as light travels and exists for thousands of years in space devoid of matter, carrying with it every detail of impression that was made on it at its

origin, and delivering up its secrets to a far distant spectroscope, generations afterwards—so in my view, it is with the intelligence which has had impressed upon it a detailed memory of earth life. It retains it thereafter in a form capable of being deciphered by, or communicated to, an appropriately receptive medium.

7

Clause Seven postulates evidence for individual survival. The vitally important question now arises —even granting some kind of impersonal permanence for mind in general—whether an individualized portion of mind can retain its individuality, long after the assemblage of particles which it once inhabited are dispersed, that is after the material organism is destroyed, although that organism may have been the physical condition of its individualization. We might be inclined wrongly to imagine that personality was dependent on the particular assemblage of particles which to us constitutes the individual, and that when that was dispersed or discarded the personality would either cease or else might return to the hypothetical general pabulum of

cosmic being whence it came. It would be irrational to suppose that it need go out of existence entirely; but it is and has been natural to imagine that what we call death is the end of the person as we knew him. We cannot by mere argument, at least I cannot, hope to establish the continued existence of the personality which has grown up in association with matter, when the matter is left behind. The Socrates of Plato made the best attempt in that direction, but evidently was not convincing. So here we come to the crux of the position, and must fall back upon experience. We must be guided by the facts of observation, and must establish (if we can establish at all) the survival of what we may now call the individual soul, not by argument, but by actual fact. How can we hope to do this?

Well, certain curious statements are made by eminent physiologists and by a few medical men, who, without any bias towards spiritualism, indeed with some revulsion from it, have testified to the formation or extrusion of protoplasmic material outside the body of an entranced person, and the apparent control of that material as if by a tem-

porarily incarnate intelligence. That intelligence, having performed some action such as would ordinarily be accomplished by musclar contraction,—say the movement of objects, and perhaps leaving a mould or imprint on plastic material,—abandons the temporarily occupied organized tissue, and presumably departs whence he came; while the borrowed material plasm returns to its source. This is not a phenomenon that I feel inclined to emphasize unduly: it is admittedly difficult of belief. But there are many facts about normal materialization and heredity which would be incredible were we not accustomed to them; and I am impressed by the evidence both for telekinesis and for this unusual kind of materialization. I perceive that when these strange occurrences are substantiated they will illustrate and reinforce my doctrine of the temporary association of ether-dwelling intelligence with matter, an association which lies at the root of all and every incarnation. They may indeed, just possibly, suggest methods for inducing life and mind to enter into relation with matter other than those with which we are at present familiar.

But the very occurrence of these, so to speak, abnormal incarnations or materializations, or psychophysical disturbances of matter, is disputed; and in any case their meaning is uncertain and their implications obscure. Not in that way nor by such aid are we likely to strengthen our conviction of personal survival: to many they seem off the track, the phenomena are called gruesome and are disliked; but science will never turn its back on them on that account. So I mention them here because they do bear witness to something tangible and physical, outside the scope of recognized scientific doctrine; and it may be that through this unlikely avenue of approach the stronghold of science may be assaulted, curiosity and interest may be aroused, the gates may thereby be opened, and a flood of supernormal knowledge may begin to enter in. I rather expect this to happen in due time.

Let us leave that part of the subject as comparatively irrelevant, and return to the question—What is the simplest and most direct way of establishing the persistence of the individual personality after bodily death? Surely the most direct plan, if it were

feasible, would be to get into actual communication with deceased individuals, so as to find out whether they still exist, and whether they retain their memory and character unchanged.

But how are we to get into contact with such discarnate entities, even assuming that they exist, when they have no material bodies, no means of manifestation, no method of communicating with us through our senses? It might have been impossible. But gradually those who have gone into the subject, and opened their minds to the evidence, have found that it is not impossible, and that the fact of telepathy comes to our aid. We have already found that a few individuals were not completely screened from mental influences when their sense organs were shut off and no physical stimulus applied. Something could be received, independently of any transmitting or receiving instrument. If those influences still continue, such individuals might still be able to receive impressions, even from discarnate intelligences; because it was not always necessary to use bodily methods of communication even when they were still possessed. Hence it is possible that some, perhaps

etheric or possibly purely psychic, method of communication will serve, even after the old material bodies have fallen to pieces.

Thus it seems possible that actual communication can be held with the discarnate. And this is what we find to be true. The receptive faculty is not widespread: it is possessed by a special person here and there, just as any other inexplicable mental faculty is possessed. Some there are in whom the mathematical faculty, or on a lower grade an arithmetical facility, is specially prominent; and these are known as calculating prodigies. Others there are with a marked musical faculty, to whom apprehension of the relation between tones comes naturally, so that they can appreciate and can produce a special sequence and co-existence of aerial vibrations, which when produced can be apprehended also in minor degree as melody and harmony by ordinary people. This power is not solely the result of education, for it occurs sometimes in quite young children. Again there are people in whom the artistic faculty is highly developed, so that an assemblage of pigments can excite in them and can be used to ex-

cite in others intense emotion; they can thus speak to the world in terms of colour and form—a language only partially apprehended by ordinary people. There are diversities of gifts; and these gifts are the outcome, not of material, but of spiritual development. So we need not be surprised at finding people with a special facility for psychic reception, apart from any special cultivation or education—a power which to them seems natural.

Accordingly we do find people with the receptive or telepathic faculty specially developed. These are popularly known as mediums, for through them and by their aid it is possible for us to attain the privilege of indirectly communicating with the discarnate. The power seems independent of nationality, circumstances, education, sex, and even intelligence. Some are men, some women, some children; some are educated scholars, some are ignorant people; while the majority are just ordinary homely citizens whom one would not pick out as anything exceptional—a selection from the kind of people who are naturally the most numerous. The way in which they exercise their gifts varies in different

cases, and in none of them is the receptive power continuous. A certain placidity seems necessary, and then, whether in solitude or in the presence of an observer, their bodily organism is occasionally actuated by an intelligence not their own. In some cases it would even seem that the psychic operator acts directly on the organism, through its brain-nerve-muscle mechanism; but in other cases the transmission appears to be telepathic, ideas being received by the recipient's mind which are then reproduced through his or her physiological organism in the ordinary way—a way to which, however mysterious it may be when considered as an interaction between mind and matter, we have grown accustomed. I will enlarge upon this later in Chapter V. The result is that either their hand writes, or their mouth speaks words and sentences—messages it may be to some relative still on earth—the meaning of which may not be apparent to the automatic writer or speaker, but which does more or less correctly represent the intention of the communicator, and is well adapted to convey a distinct meaning to the person to whom it is addressed, or for whom it is intended. Such

messages are now frequently being received by bereaved people, who are thus enabled to get into touch with their loved ones, and to find that their memory and character and affection persist. Evidence of identity is given, and has to be given, through what may be called trivial reminiscences, the kind of reminiscences that would naturally be used for the purpose by a distant person seeking to establish his identity, say through a telephone. The evidence of identity is often so strong that the bereaved person has his scepticism broken down, and is able to receive the comfort and hope intended. It may be thought that bereaved people are specially prone to believe, and are willing to catch at straws. That is occasionally so, but by no means always: sometimes the longing for assured conviction rightly makes them ultra-sceptical.

Moreover, the proof does not depend solely on the testimony of bereaved people. Evidence for identity has been examined by scientific investigators, who are aware of all the difficulties associated with possible thought-reading from the living, the danger of personation, and the like. So gradually

the proof of personal identity is being established in a careful and systematic manner; partly by the critical examination of those on this side, but mainly by the special and highly intelligent efforts of communicators from beyond. Some of these were specially interested in the subject while here, and they appear to have made a special effort to exclude the facile, or sometimes ingenious, hypotheses that have gradually accumulated and been put forward as an alternative possibility.

To me the evidence is now virtually complete, and I have no more doubt of the continued existence of surviving personalities than I have of any deduction from ordinary normal experience. The persons who take the trouble to communicate are much the same as they were; they are gradually progressing, no doubt, but not immediately getting out of touch with earth. Some of them are actuated by affection for those left behind, disturbed by their sorrow, sharing their joy, and anxious to give comfort and hope through the knowledge of continued affection, interest, and help, the certainty of recognition, and the clear expectation of ultimate reunion. Others

there are who are actuated by a sense of duty, which impels them to enlighten the world concerning the reality of survival, to instruct us as far as they can about the manner of their existence, and to show that they sympathize and have some power of still helping in mundane affairs. It seems, moreover, that they are sometimes able to infer or see what is coming, and to send caution and advice, just as they might have done while here, and generally to impress us with the importance of our earth-life opportunities, the responsibility of our privileges, the permanence of character, and the sustained power of continued work and service hereafter.

Once their identity has been established, they are willing to talk to us, though doubtless with difficulty and under half-understood conditions, about their enlarged view of existence and its wide possibilities. Their understanding of things is, needless to say, far from complete; they know a little more than we do, but not very much. There are things which still puzzle them, though to some of our problems they feel that they have a solution. They are not to be treated as oracles or infallible

sources of information; they have their ignorances and disabilities; but these gradually diminish as time goes on, and the general outcome of their teaching is of a high and lofty character.

Indeed it may be claimed that some of our own inspirations—the flashes of genius—really come from them; they are more in touch with us than we know. And we too appear to be able to help them by our thoughts and actions. There is no gulf or gap, other than a sensory gap, between us and them; we are still all one family. They have been emancipated from material difficulties, but otherwise are unchanged. They view our earth life with encouragement and hope; they constitute what has been called a cloud of witnesses. They look forward to a time of reunion and steady progress and to the attainment of still higher conditions. Better things are in store, and they without us are not made perfect.

Difficulties and Objections

Every now and then we hear an objection to the utilization of mediums for the purposes of communication. People ask why they cannot them-

selves communicate direct. Well, if they have the faculty and power, they can do so; but if they have not, they must use the appointed means. When people want to communicate with a distant person by telegram, they do not do it directly—they don't know how. They utilize the services of an uninterested operator, or pair of operators; that is to say, they use a medium. Indeed, so it is with all our methods of normal communication. We are always using a medium, though we do not recognize it. In speech we use the vibrations of the air; in vision we utilize the vibrations of the ether; even in touch we use the accustomed instrument of our own body. In communication with the discarnate we have to use the bodily mechanism of such people as have the faculty needed for such communication. This faculty is, perhaps mercifully, denied to most of us, in order that we may attend to our own business and do our respective duties. A medium is one who sacrifices part of his or her own life in order to give help to others. To them we ought to be grateful, and make their task easier. The idea of grudging them the modest remuneration which enables them to

live while devoting themselves to the service of others, is utterly preposterous. At present their task is made difficult by general suspicion—even by antiquated legal enactments—and they suffer from the disgraceful activities of a few impostors who, not really possessing the power, simulate it for their own ends. That such scoundrels have existed is known: that they are numerous is improbable. But wherever they exist they are a danger, like any other heartless swindlers. A competent investigator would soon discover them, and their fraudulent career should be terminated.

Apart from villainy, however, the power of genuine communication is variable; some mediums are much stronger than others, and in none of them is the power uniform. Common-sense must be used, and allowances made, in this as in all other subjects. If the process of communication were easy, it would have been recognized long ago. There is no reason why the scientific demonstration or proof of human survival should be easy. Gradually modern science is beginning to attend, and in due time the whole thing will be put on a more satisfactory footing

than at present. It is now going through the early stages, through which every nascent science has had to go. There was a time when radio-telegraphy was impossible; now it is commonplace. I do not say that the use of telepathy or mediumship will ever be commonplace, for we are dealing with powers far less understood than are the devices of radio-telegraphy. A century ago we could not use electricity: it seemed, and perhaps still seems, mysterious. The existence of the universal and all-pervading ether has been denied, though we feel its quivers when we toast in front of a fire or bask in the sunshine, and though we send messages by it daily. Whether there is any physical medium for telepathic communication, whether the ether of space serves for this also, and whether our continued existence is associated with that substance instead of with matter, we do not yet know for certain. The departed seem to think it is so, and as far as my knowledge goes they may be right. But in all scientific questions it is proper for us to investigate on our own behalf, and not accept without verification the testimony of others, however well they may seem to be informed.

On all this, and many other obscure questions, we shall gain more knowledge, and be able to formulate a better theory, if we gradually advance along the lines of scientific method which have already proved so fruitful. To quote F. W. H. Myers again:

> Science forms a language common to all mankind; she can explain herself when she is misunderstood, and right herself when she goes wrong; nor has humanity yet found . . . that the methods of Science, intelligently and honestly followed, have led us in the end astray.

CHAPTER III

THE CASE FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

When the pioneer, battered and tested by oppugnant forces, shall at length have made good to the general mind his case, at the ripe moment Authority will yield and will open the door; and the once heretical merchandise will be quietly passed into the depôts of orthodoxy.

(Cited in the *Hibbert Journal* for January, 1928, by the Rev. Hubert Handley in a note dealing with von Hügel's utterances on ecclesiastical, not psychical problems.)

If our inquiry lead us first through a jungle of fraud and folly, need that alarm us? As well might Columbus have yielded to the sailors' panic, when he was entangled in the Sargasso Sea. If our first clear facts about the Unseen World seem small and trivial, should that deter us from the quest? As well might Columbus have sailed home again, with America in the offing, on the ground that it was not

worth while to discover a continent which manifested itself only by dead logs.

F. W. H. Myers,
Human Personality, II, 306.

The history of science is no doubt a record of brilliant achievement, but it is also a record of opposition and conservative obstruction. Well-established theories hold the field, and new departures are apt to be resented. The advocates of truth have always had to run the gauntlet of hostile criticism, and some of them have been lucky if they have escaped persecution. Anatomists had to carry on their work in secret. The circulation of the blood was received with opprobium. Galileo's telescopic discoveries were objected to, and some professors declined to look through the instrument, having a fixed idea that the appearances were deceptive. Thus not only theories, but actual facts, were turned down or disregarded. Roger Bacon was accused of magic and superstition; and nearly every discovery has been received with some opprobrium. Even in our own day it may be remembered that Joule's first demonstrations of the conservation of energy were shelved,

and the first elaborate Paper on the kinetic theory of gases was turned down and rejected, by the Royal Society. It cannot be said that even the discovery of the chemically inert gas "argon" was received by chemists with enthusiasm.

Hence there is nothing surprising in the fact that the investigations of Sir William Crookes into psychic phenomena were looked at askance, disbelieved, and left wholly outside the domain of science. To this day they are not admitted; and there is certainly some excuse for scepticism, inasmuch as they were of a character which seemed frankly incredible. He went on, however, to devise some few simple experiments of a mechanical kind, exhibiting either an apparent alteration in the weight of bodies or else the exertion of a mysterious force, which he did hope at one time that the officials of the Royal Society could be induced to examine. Again, however, without gaining their consent to be present at what seemed like an impossibility.

It is perhaps instructive, though nowadays rather difficult, to realize that the experimental method itself, the method of direct unfettered examination

of phenomena, is not many centuries old. It had to be advocated by Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam; and when put into practice by Galileo it seems to have struck people as almost an impious novelty. The results obtained were often out of accord with ancient teaching, which had the authority of centuries or even millennia behind it. Some of the opposition no doubt came not only from Aristotelian philosophers but also from ecclesiastics and other literary scholars, who took their stand upon ancient sacred writings, with which the facts of Astronomy and Geology were, or seemed to be, inconsistent. Indeed, clerical opposition to Geology comes almost within living memory.

Nevertheless the pertinancy of scientific men has now in most subjects won the battle for free exploration of nature, no matter what old views were upset, or what the expected consequences might be. The method of experiment, in chemical, physical, and biological sciences, has at length secured general favour, with only a few dissentients; so that now rational opposition is mainly concerned with theoretical views, which may quite legitimately be ques-

tioned: while facts are for the most part accepted, or at any rate carefully examined and looked into, by practically the whole body of science. In that way genuine facts are sorted out from the spurious variety, and working hypotheses are tolerated as a reasonable effort to understand them. It may be said now that nothing in the old-established doctrines of Mechanics, Physics, and Chemistry, is regarded as too sacred or too absolutely certain for re-consideration, improvement and reform. It might even be claimed that the willingness to admit revolutionary theories, such as the quantum and relativity, has run to excess; for hypotheses are freely made on slender evidence, and admitted as stepping-stones to higher and fuller knowledge in the future, even though for a time they run counter to our prepossessions and predilections, based on what we have considered a fairly adequate and comprehensive view of the general structure of the universe.

But although this is true in most of the established sciences, it is noteworthy that what for brevity may be called Psychic Science has not yet

secured its charter of freedom; the experimental method in that science is under a cloud of suspicion and dislike. Facts are asserted by competent investigators which no orthodox Society thinks it worth while to attend to: they seem to be discordant with the general structure of the universe as now ascertained, and they are accordingly outside the pale. The time, however, will surely come when this opposition will be broken down by the force and continued reiteration of the facts themselves; even apart from the advocacy of those who have sacrificed themselves so far as cautiously to attempt their examination. The experimental method, applied to what Professor Richet calls Metapsychics, that is the unusual or abnormal branch of Psychology, is on trial, and is only making its way slowly against difficulties caused by general disapprobation, and a tendency to persecute the human instruments through whom alone knowledge on the subject can be obtained and by whose aid experiments are conducted.

Well, for a time this condition of things must be endured. For admittedly the facts are surprising. They have to be studied under unusual conditions;

they have often been enveloped in an atmosphere of folklore and superstition; and some of them have laid themselves open to charges of priestcraft and fraud. Moreover, in so far as they seem, some of them, to have a bearing on the hopes and aspirations of mankind, in so far as they are mixed up with human affection and bereavements, in so far as they contribute to consolation and have a bearing on religious faith, we instinctively and rightly feel that they must be examined and criticized with extra care: and it requires an effort to treat them in the cold-blooded critical spirit appropriate to scientific inquiry.

In one form or another the phenomena have been asserted throughout human history. Ancient religious literature is full of them. Relics of them can be traced in the practices of uncivilized races. They seem, somehow, alien to our present state of civilization, and only with difficulty can they be accepted by trained modern scientific observers. But all this only exhibits their immense importance if once their actual truth can be established; for according to the assertions of investigators they are of a very ex-

tensive variety. The facts involved are not mental alone, but are physical and physiological also; and if in the long run they prove true, it must mean the opening of far more than a new chapter, a new volume, in human knowledge.

Let us briefly run over some of the points in which they seem discordant with the general trend of mechanical and material explanation, which since the days of Newton has been so fruitful and successful.

First of all we must insist that in no way do they deny or replace a mechanistic explanation so far as it goes: they supplement it, as do all vital phenomena. For they clearly call upon us to go further, and admit that physiological mechanism is by no means the last word. Unless something more is taken into account, the mechanistic explanation is incomplete. They involve an admission of life and mind as realities, apart from matter, as something outside material processes, which nevertheless interacts with them, guiding and determining them in full accordance with the laws of energy, but yet producing results which otherwise through inorganic nature

would never have occurred. The brain becomes the organ or instrument of mind, not mind itself. The organism, whether it be a protoplasmic cell or a conglomeration of such cells, is activated by a non-understood entity called life, which utilizes matter and energy for its own purposes. The mechanical operations can be followed in every department of metabolism; the stages in the gradual growth of an organism and of its several parts can be followed in detail, but the spontaneous behaviour of an organism cannot be explained in terms of molecular activity alone.

Moreover, these higher entities which we speak of as life and mind are being found to have powers of an unsuspected and hitherto unexplored kind; going beyond the usual and well-known processes hitherto studied in the various branches of Biology and Psychology. And there are certain facts which seem to show that the activity of mind is not limited to the working of its bodily instrument or organ, but that it can conduct operations apart from any material instrument; though admittedly a material instrument is necessary for displaying the result of

those operations. Probably this is because we are hampered in our perceptions by the limited nature of our sense-organs,—those organs which we share with the animals,—which tell us directly only of matter, and which were evolved for purposes far other than scientific and philosophical inquiry.

It is true that we supplement our physiological organs by instruments; but these also are of a material and mechanical nature, at least if we admit electricity as part of the material universe. Strictly speaking, however, electricity and magnetism and light, cohesion and gravitation, though displayed by the behaviour of matter, are in the broad sense physical rather than material. And it seems to me that when we take the ether into account, to the full extent which hereafter we shall find justifiable, we may hope to find the clue to the indirect interaction with matter of those more directly apprehended entities, life and mind, which in all probability have a more genuine and permanent connection with the ether than with the particles of matter embedded in it. That is at present a working hypothesis, which must not be unduly pressed. But those who are im-

pressed with the necessity for a physical concomitant of every activity, mental or other, need not give up all their belief prematurely, but may continue to hope that some hitherto unsuspected and therefore recondite explanation of life and mind may ultimately be found, through a better understanding of the structure, properties, and functions of the ether of space.

Leaving aside all this as speculation, what are the experimental facts which have been asserted and held to be substantiated by those who have probed into them sufficiently to form an opinion?

First of all stands the phenomenon of telepathy; that is to say, the communication from one mind to another of information or ideas, or even sensations, apart from any recognized bodily channels of communication. The faculty of telepathic reception is not widespread; at any rate among civilized people, who have achieved so many other methods. It may be that speech and writing have rendered telepathy unnecessary; so that the faculty is partially atrophied. Or it may be that it is the germ of a nascent faculty which will only attain full development

when the bodily organism is discarded. For the bodily organism certainly seems to isolate us as individuals, and to screen us from the reception of thoughts except through the familiar channels of hearing and sight and touch.

But experiment has shown that with certain individuals it is possible to transmit from one to another by unknown and unrecognized means. The thing transmitted may be the notion of an object, or it may be a localized pain, or it may be an impression of illness or death. The latter transmission, however —that of illness or calamity—does not come within the experimental range: it comes rather as a spontaneous impression, apparently independent of distance, and is sometimes so vivid as to call up an image, or what may be called an hallucination or vision, or sometimes an audition, of the ill or distressed person at a distance. Many people there are who have thus received as it were a "call" from someone far off who is longing for their presence. And the possibility of these sometimes pathetic instances has been justified by the experimental variety of thought-transmission, when no emotion

is involved, and when the idea transferred is of the most commonplace character, determined merely by the investigator in charge of the experiment.

The general outline of telepathic experiments of this character must by this time be fairly well known; and it is quite likely that if more experiments were carefully tried, many people would be found to have some trace of the receiving faculty. But undoubtedly these phenomena have their own laws; we have to find out the conditions for success, and every experimenter knows that he must not be disappointed by failure.

Suppose that telepathy is definitely established, what is its importance? Its main importance seems to consist in a demonstration that mental activity is not limited to the bodily organs and instruments through which it is normally conveyed: in other words that mind is independent of body, and that we are not bound to assume the destruction or cessation of mind when its bodily instrument is destroyed. It would be in fact a step, though only a first step, towards a demonstration of survival.

But a further step has already been taken by in-

vestigators. They assert, and indeed I myself assert, that it is possible to get into telepathic communication with those who have survived the death of the body. Their mind, their character, their personality, persists; and though they cannot directly make any impression on our material senses, yet urged by continued affection, or by some other sufficient motive, they can occasionally make use of a physiological instrument—the brain-nerve-muscle mechanism of a living person endowed with the receptive or telepathic faculty—so as to convey messages to those left behind. And in so doing they often take steps to prove their identity and establish their continued existence.

It is not easy to say all this, for it is not a thing to be said lightly. I only say it on the strength of a great body of evidence, now known to me and to many others. Either it is true or false. If it is true, it is difficult to overrate its tremendous importance. In so far as the hopes and future of humanity, or rather of human individuals, are concerned, the evidence must be long and carefully scrutinized.

Well, this is the kind of experiment which hither-

to has been completely ignored by orthodox science. Experiment in such matters is resented both by the scientific and the religious world. The instruments or so-called "mediums" through whom we make these experiments are in danger of prosecution by the law. The charter of freedom has not yet been completely won by science. There are still unpopular branches of inquiry; there still seem to be subjects into which we are forbidden to look. The old gauntlet of ridicule and opposition has still to be run. But times are gradually changing: the atmosphere is clearing; already it is far clearer than it was in my youth, when I too should have turned all this down as hopeless superstition. I expect that before long some of the younger members of the scientific fraternity, not only physicists but biologists also, will open their minds to unsuspected possibilities, and in process of time will construct a splendid edifice on the gropings and hesitations and incredible assertions of the past.

But these mental phenomena that seem to group themselves about the discovery of telepathy, and to establish the fact of survival, are by no means the

only phenomena which investigators have asserted or found to occur. They are in some respects the most interesting, though the least tangible and material portion of the subject. It is sometimes claimed that there is not only telepathy, mind acting on mind, but telergy, mind acting on body and brain. That mind acts on body is familiar enough, but it acts usually on its own body. In the unusual cases an alien mind appears to be acting and temporarily working physiological mechanism whose owner has relaxed control. It is probably through ordinary mental transmission that hypnotic phenomena are produced. But subconscious mind can act on body in a peculiar way, according to medical testimony, producing blisters and other marks in the organism, and interfering with normal processes in unexplained fashion. The assertion is made that this also can be done from a distance, and that even the cells of a brain may, by special effort, be stimulated by a discarnate mind not usually associated with that particular brain; and that thus automatic writing or speech can be produced concerning things unapprehended by the normal personality.

Furthermore it is claimed that under certain conditions, and in the presence of a suitable organism, even inorganic things can be moved—weights raised, things carried about, and other actions performed, which though easily done by the muscles, can apparently be done exceptionally in some other way. These strange phenomena have been chiefly explored by investigators on the Continent, whose medical training enables them to take the precautions necessary to secure the genuine occurrence of facts of this nature. The working hypothesis is that the objects are moved by a sort of emanation from the body of the medium, which is called "ectoplasm," or extruded protoplasm, a temporarily extraneous portion of the organism, which, having achieved its object, returns to its place. Some of these phenomena may seem repulsive; but they demand inquiry from those competent to investigate them. They belong to the biological and perhaps pathological region, wherein I usually hold my peace. It is claimed that by means of this strange material actual materializations may occur, so as to display and bring into the region of matter forms

which had previously only existed in the ether. It is claimed that just as we are incarnations or materializations, associated with matter for a period of something less than a century, so these are temporary formations or materializations, which show themselves for a short time and then disappear; meanwhile, being able to be seen, handled, and photographed.

Is it surprising that science turns a blind eye and a deaf ear to these weird phenomena, so troublesome and sometimes painful to produce, so difficult to investigate? It is not at all surprising; yet the evidence is strong; and those who are by training competent to investigate these things, incur responsibility if they discountenance them. Every new fact may seem odd at first. There seems no place for these things in the recognized body of science; and for myself at present I make no assertion about them, for my first-hand acquaintance with them has been comparatively small. But I have seen enough to know that telekinesis at any rate, the motion of objects without apparent contact, does occur; and I have an open mind—justified by some experience—

for the assertions of those physiologists and anatomists who have testified to the phenomena of materialization.

The extrusion of ectoplasmic material from the body seems at first a repellent object of inquiry; though it must be remembered that our own internal organs are not superficially attractive, however useful they are, and however interesting they may be to those who study them. Ectoplasm is only the name given to a kind of organized cellular material, which it is asserted does emanate from certain individuals for a time; it appears to have unexplained and extraordinary properties, being able to mould itself or to form simulacra of hands and faces, as if guided by some subconscious intelligence to do outside the body the same sort of processes as are usually performed inside. For undoubtedly the material supplied as food is formed by the normal activity of the body into the various organs appropriate to the locality whither it is carried by the blood. It is not the food itself, but the formative principle which determines whether it shall form a nail or a hair or contribute to a muscle or an eye or any other

part of the body. Indeed, by aid of a placenta a fertilized ovum is able to form a complete separate new organism—in itself one would think a sufficiently astonishing fact.

That this same formative principle can ever act outside the body, as it normally acts inside, is hardly credible, and by orthodox science is not yet believed. The question of whether it is a fact or not is a straightforward one; to be answered, not by theory or prejudice, but by observation and experiment. Those who undertake such experiments should be qualified by previous training in physiology and anatomy. It is purely a scientific question, which if answered affirmatively must enlarge our knowledge of the connection between mind and matter; but otherwise it would seem to have no special bearing on the question of survival or any of the things in which the majority of mankind are interested. At the same time it must be admitted that any fact, so it be a fact, must have an importance of its own; and we have high authority for the statement that nothing in nature is to be regarded as common or unclean.

There is yet another group of phenomena, not so superficially repellent as the last, which go by the name of Clairvoyance and Lucidity—the perception of events occurring at a distance, the reading of sealed letters, or of closed books, and the detection of hidden objects or of subterranean streams. The evidence for a power of this kind, possessed by certain exceptional individuals, is growing in strength; and some of the facts do not seem explicable by telepathy or mind-reading. But that is still uncertain. The hypothesis of telepathy must be stretched to the uttermost before any further hypothesis is made. We always wish to appeal to as few final causes as possible. And inasmuch as anything written or printed must have been in somebody's mind at some time, we must be careful before we assume that the actual script is read directly by supernormal means, that is, by some method to which we are unaccustomed, and to which therefore we have no clue. It is really wonderful that black marks on paper can mean so much to us as they normally do; and though we have got used to that method of stimulating ideas and artistic per-

ception, it would be rash to suppose that we have exhausted every such method, in the face of evidence to the contrary.

There seems, indeed, to be a reciprocal action between mind and matter. By our thoughts, will, and intention, we can cause matter to be moved; and thus produce not only speech and writing, but great structures, bridges and cathedrals, previously designed in the mind. And the material arrangements thus produced, say in works of art, have the power to call out in subsequent minds something of the feeling and emotion felt by their designer. This is the whole principle of works of art. They are detents or triggers for a store of latent intelligence and emotion. The question arises whether other arrangements of matter can appeal to us in a less prearranged manner. Mental impressions can already be stored in matter, by such instruments as the gramophone and the photographic plate. There are some who think that violent emotion can be likewise unconsciously stored in matter; so that a room where a tragedy has occurred shall exert an influence on the next generation, or rather on anyone sufficiently

sensitive to feel it. In this way it is hoped that some day the strange influence of certain localities, whereby a tragedy seems to be re-enacted, can be rationally explained; and the puzzling phenomenon popularly known as "haunting" can be removed from the region of superstition to the domain of fact.

In many respects the powers of the subconscious mind, as exhibited in the various kinds of clairvoyance or lucidity, or what by Professor Richet is called "Cryptesthesia," transcend the ordinary limitations of space, so that distance and opacity are no bar to this kind of ultra-normal perception. Some further facts have been testified to, facts which have gradually overborne the natural scepticism of those who have examined them, and led them to think that occasionally even the limitations of *time* can be transcended; so that events can be dimly discerned, not only in the past, and not only at a distance, but also to some extent in the future likewise. The whole subject of premonitions and precognitions is an exceptionally difficult one; and how far the future is prearranged, so that a perception of what is likely to occur can be attained, raises ques-

tions about the nature of time which at present we cannot answer.

We know that prediction is possible in the inorganic world, especially in the simplified motions studied in astronomy; and it may be assumed that a wider knowledge, say of the motion of molecules and of the structure of matter, might enable us to foresee those cataclysmic changes which we commonly call accidents, and thus to anticipate disasters and convulsions of nature before there are any normal indications. It can be granted that the universe is an orderly sequence of cause and effect, and that a full knowledge of the present condition might enable us to infer the future emergence of what is already in preparation. Such wide knowledge we do not ourselves possess; but if there are higher intelligences in the universe—and it would be a strange assumption to assume that we are the highest—they may have channels of information such as we do not possess; and, through sensitive individuals, they may be able to communicate their knowledge.

In such speculations we are going far afield, beyond the range of recognized science; and we must

tread warily. But I imagine and believe that gradually we shall find we are not so isolated in the universe as we had thought, that we are surrounded by intelligences, of which we have no normal knowledge, who are only indirectly and occasionally associated with matter. And I expect that the continued cautious and careful study of psychic phenomena will lead us far beyond our present acquaintance with things as they are, and guide us into a domain of which we now only catch dim and puzzling glimpses. Science in fact is beginning—only beginning—perhaps has not begun—to discover the reality of that spiritual world which has long exerted an influence on poets and saints and mystics: that world which has been the perennial fount of inspiration, and has always been the theme of Theology and the motive power of religion.

CHAPTER IV

AN ILLUSTRATIVE CHAPTER OF SOME PSYCHICAL PHENOMENA

> Bacon foresaw the gradual victory of observation and experiment—the triumph of actual analyzed fact—in every department of human study; —in every department save one. . . . I here urge that that great exemption need be no longer made.
>
> F. W. Myers,
> *Human Personality*, II, 279.

In illustration of some of the faculties which have been incidentally referred to on the foregoing chapters I might quote a great number of incidents, many of which have been recorded in books or in the *Proceedings of the S. P. R.* But I will confine myself to a few mainly unpublished episodes, which illustrate one or another of the faculties possessed by mediums. Standing by themselves, these episodes,

though striking, would not be conclusive, but as part of a great body of testimony in the same direction they have their value. The incidents I select are illustrative of classes of simple psychic experiences, four in number. For various reasons these have not yet been printed, except the two non-personal ones that I begin and finish with.

The first class consists of incidents illustrating the giving of information about current events occurring elsewhere, either at the time or shortly before the information was given. I will take three of these incidents. Two of them were immediately capable of verification; the third one is not yet verified, nor perhaps ever likely to be verified. Nevertheless it seems to me that it ought to be put on record, in case circumstances should arise in the future which will either confirm or refute it.[1]

The second class of incident illustrates the apparent faculty of prediction, or forecast in some detail,

[1]Unfortunately this long spelt-out message about the Himalayan catastrophe in 1924, received under conditions described below (pp. 95, 96), has had to be omitted, in deference to the wishes of the family concerned. It is therefore now merely filed with the S.P.R., for future reference if necessary, and another episode substitued in this book, pp. 98-106.

of unlikely coming events; not events of any public importance, but nevertheless events which subsequently occurred.

Thirdly I will take an instance of psychometry or diagnosis, apparently from an object, a faculty well-known to investigators and rather common.

Fourthly, an episode of a different kind, an example of our more free and easy conversations through Mrs. Leonard's control Feda, being a discussion of the inter-relation between the departed and ourselves. Incidentally this conversion enabled a sort of doubtfully successful test to be applied to check the identity of one of the communicators.

CLASS I.—CLAIRVOYANCE. INSTANCES OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CONTEMPORARY EVENTS

Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen

Three Incidents

Episode A

First, information concerning the assassination of Queen Draga and her brothers in Serbia. This was received by my friend Professor Richet, and was fully reported on by him to me at the time (1903). Briefly as follows:

On the evening of the assassination (which naturally was entirely unknown and unthought of) he and some friends were sitting in Paris, while letters of the alphabet were being tilted or rapped out. These were taken down and subsequently interpreted. Neither the group nor the medium on that occasion is at all known to me: I am giving the account at second hand. After several ordinary messages had been received, the control seemed to change

and become urgent, and the following letters were indicated by raps of special clarity: BANCALAMO. On which Richet remarked, "It's going to be Latin—'with a pen.'" But the spelling went on, with apparently meaningless letters, RTGU. Accordingly he lost interest, but took down the rest mechanically: ETTEFAMILLE. No meaning was attached to this, except that it seemed to have to do with some family. Soon afterwards he perceived that it could be split up into words thus: BANCA LA MORT GUETTE FAMILLE. This message was received on Wednesday, 10th June, 1903, at 10.30 p.m.

Two days later the French papers were full of the brutal murder of King Alexander with his consort Queen Draga and her brothers at Belgrade; and the name of the Queen's father, not long deceased, was given as Pança—whose whole family had been in danger of being wiped out by assassination. (The *c* with a cedilla might be the nearest approach in the French language to a letter in the Serbian language that I am told is pronounced halfway between *s* or *ts* and *z* or *tz*, for which in French there is no

corresponding letter.) Richet, rather surprisingly, seeing this name in the evening papers of the 12th of June, was struck with the similarity between this hitherto unknown name Pança, sometimes quoted as Panka, and the beginning of the mysterious message with the unknown word Banca; the only real error being the confusion of B for P. Accordingly he now read the message as a sort of telegraphic communication from or concerning Pança or Panca, to the effect that at that moment death was lurking or lying in wait for his family. "La mort guette famille."

On making inquiries, and going into the matter further, Richet found that the assassination occurred soon after midnight, so that at the time of the sitting it had not occurred; but the time at which the message was received in Paris, 10.30 p.m. on 10th June, 1903, must have been close to the time at which the assassins left the Hôtel de la Couronne de Serbie, at Belgrade, on their fatal errand. There was no "summer time" then, and 10.30 in Paris would be practically midnight in Serbia. Thus, as Richet pointed out, the word "guette" was singularly appro-

priate—the kind of attitude of a cat lying in wait for a mouse. It would not have been so appropriate a few hours later, nor indeed quite so appropriate a few hours earlier.

The murder was near midnight on Wednesday, or rather "shortly before dawn" on Thursday morning, 11th June, 1903, to quote from Mijatovitch's history ("Serbian Tragedy," 1906); "between 10.30 and 2.0 this morning, 11th," to quote from *The Times* of Friday, the 12th June, 1903. The news reached Paris, as he afterwards found, on Thursday at 2 p.m., but Richet did not read any details till Friday.

Why any communication should be made to unknown and uninterested people in Paris, to the effect that Pança's family was in danger of extermination, Richet does not attempt to explain. All we know is that that collocation of letters was received on that special occasion, and that subsequently it was capable of intelligible interpretation. Richet treats it as merely a case of "cryptesthesia, over a distance of 2,000 kilometres"; though how such a term—suggestive of hypersensitiveness to physio-

logical impression—can apply in this instance is beyond me. But on the spiritistic hypothesis—which I, though not Richet, am inclined to accept—it can be imagined that Myers, or one of the S. P. R. group "on the other side," saw an opportunity of demonstrating supernormal power by suddenly interposing, among the fragmentary messages then being spelt out to his friend Charles Richet, a sentence which, though spasmodic and obscure, would ultimately become intelligible and arouse interest.

This account of the incident (apart from hypothetical and needless attempts at explanation) is my vivid recollection of what Professor Richet told me at the time. He was much impressed with it, especially with the time coincidence. True, death might have been lurking for many families, but had it been an obscure family such a message would have been useless. The particular family intended was only specified by the name Banca, which is not accurately the same as Pança or Panka. In Professor Richet's printed account of the incident (reproduced—with misprints in early editions—in his "*Traité de Métapsychique*," page 204, translated as

"Thirty Years of Psychical Research," page 167) he discusses the amount of error so involved, on the doctrine of chances, and finds it incredible that the near approach to the name, in the punctual message, was due to chance. As to the absence of normal knowledge—that was complete. No one in Paris then knew of the secret plot against King Alexander and his consort, Draga; and of the five persons present at the sitting no one had relations with any Balkan state and probably they had hardly ever heard of Queen Draga. The message, if it was a message, was certainly given before the event was known; though it rightly comes under the heading "contemporary events" and not under the heading "prediction." The whole family of Pança was at that moment in dire danger: Draga and her two brothers were actually killed, though it turned out that her two sisters just managed to escape.

Remarks on the Spelling Method of Receiving Messages

The above message was apparently received by raps, but concerning the method by which similar

incidents have been received by me, through private friends, I ought to say that one of the two ladies concerned has the power of spelling out sentences by a more elementary method than raps, namely by the very rapid tilts of a small table on which she places her hand. She rapidly recites the alphabet, and stops at the intended letter, which is at once taken down by the other lady, and by me also if I am present. The meaning of the series of letters is often not apparent at once—sometimes it is—and the wonder is that by this apparently laborious process any coherence is obtained. It is, however, quite easy, with practice, and the process is not very slow. Often a short series of communicators follow one another; each, having said what he had to say, spelling out his name and giving way to another. We sometimes do not know who the message is from until the name is given at the end; though habitual communicators are easily recognized by their manner and style. When Myers is the operator the medium feels screwed up and taut, so to speak; with others there is more relaxation.

In the case of this amateur lady medium, who has

had the power for many years, the control often *seems* to be direct from the communicator to the arm manipulating the little table, so that her mind hardly takes in, and seldom tries to take in, what is being said. As the letters are taken down, the meaning of each sentence when completed becomes clear to the recorders. The records which follow are reduced, with here and there a trivial omission for brevity, exactly as received.[1]

Episode B

The following incident, which is a very short and simple one, concerns the election of Hindenburg to the Presidency of the German Republic. On the evening of Sunday, 26th April, 1925, my wife and I were sitting privately with these two English lady friends in Paris, having a domestic talk through table tilts with Raymond, not thinking of public affairs at all, and not in the least interested in anything happening in Germany, when at 10 p.m. Raymond suddenly broke off and spelt out:

Hindenburg is in. I'm going to see the fun. Good-night. R. L.

[1]See note, p. 88.

Next day (Monday, 27th April, 1925) a Stop-Press announcement in the *Continental Daily Mail* ran thus: "A Reuter message filed in Berlin at 1.18 this morning states that Hindenburg has been elected."

Episode C

Illustrative of Posthumous Activity and Effort at Righting a Wrong

The following case was received by the S.P.R. from one of its Canadian members who, having had his attention drawn to it by a newspaper report, instructed a lawyer resident in the State (North Carolina) where the events occurred to investigate the facts on his behalf. The facts had already been put in evidence in a contested law-suit, so that they have on two occasions undergone the scrutiny of persons professionally trained to sift and weigh evidence. In due course the British Society for Psychical Research received certain sworn documents, and what follows is partly an abstract of these documents, and partly quotations from them.

James L. Chaffin, the Testator, was a farmer in Davie County, N. C. He was married and had four

sons, in order of age John A. Chaffin, James Pinkney Chaffin, Marshall A. Chaffin, and Abner Columbus Chaffin.

On the 16th November, 1905, the Testator made a will, duly attested by two witnesses, whereby he gave his farm to his third son, Marshall, whom he appointed sole executor. The widow and the other three sons were left unprovided for.

Sixteen years afterwards, on the 7th September, 1921, the Testator died as the result of a fall. His third son, Marshall, obtained probate of the 1905 will on the 24th September of that year. The mother and the other three brothers did not contest this will as they knew of no valid reason for doing so. But afterwards, in 1925, some odd events happened, which are thus narrated:

Extract from Statement of James Pinkney Chaffin, Testator's Second Son.

> In all my life I never heard my father mention having made a later will than the one dated in 1905. I think it was in June of 1925 that I began to have very vivid dreams that my father appeared to me at my bedside but made no verbal communication.

Some time later, I think it was the latter part of June, 1925, he appeared at my bedside again, dressed as I had often seen him dressed in life, wearing a black overcoat which I knew to be his own coat. This time my father's spirit spoke to me, he took hold of his overcoat this way and pulled it back and said, "You will find my will in my overcoat pocket," and then disappeared.

Next morning I arose fully convinced that father's spirit had visited me for the purpose of explaining some mistake. I went to mother's and sought for the overcoat but found that it was gone. Mother stated that she had given the overcoat to my brother John who lives in Yadkin County about twenty miles northwest of my home. I think it was on the 6th of July, which was on Monday following the events stated in the last paragraph, I went to my brother's home in Yadkin County and found the coat. On examination of the inside pocket I found that the lining had been sewed together. I immediately cut the stitches and found a little roll of paper tied with a string which was in my father's handwriting and contained only the following words: "Read the 27th chapter of Genesis in my daddie's old Bible."

At this point I was so convinced that the mystery was to be cleared up I was unwilling to go to mother's home to examine the old Bible without the

presence of a witness, and I induced a neighbour, Mr. Thos. Blackwelder, to accompany me, also my daughter and Mr. Blackwelder's daughter were present. Arriving at mother's home we had a considerable search before we found the old Bible. At last we did find it in the top bureau drawer in an upstairs room. The book was so dilapidated that when we took it out it fell into three pieces. Mr. Blackwelder picked up the portion containing the Book of Genesis and turned the leaves until he came to the 27th chapter of Genesis, and there found two leaves folded together, the left hand page folded to the right and the right hand page folded to the left, forming a pocket, and in this pocket Mr. Blackwelder found the will.

That is to say he found an informally worded document dated 16th January, 1919, which ran as follows:

After reading the 27th chapter of Genesis, I, James L. Chaffin, do make my last will and testament, and here it is. I want, after giving my body a decent burial, my little property to be equally divided between my four children, if they are living at my death, both personal and real estate divided equal, if not living, give share to their children. And if she is living, you all must take care of your

mammy. Now this is my last will and testament. Witness my hand and seal.

JAMES L. CHAFFIN,

This *January* 16, 1919.

This second will, though unattested, would, according to the law of North Carolina, be valid as being written throughout by the Testator's own hand on sufficient evidence being adduced that it was in fact in his handwriting.

The Testator, having written out this will, must have placed it between two pages of an old family Bible, formerly belonging to his father, the Rev. Nathan S. Chaffin, folding the pages over so as to make a sort of pocket. The pages so folded were those containing the 27th Chapter of Genesis, which tells how the younger brother Jacob supplanted the elder brother Esau, and won his birthright and his father's blessing. The sole beneficiary under the first will was, it will be remembered, a younger brother.

The Testator never before his death, so far as can be ascertained, mentioned the existence of this second will to anyone, but in the inside pocket of an

overcoat belonging to him he stitched up a roll of paper, on which he had written the words "Read the 27th chapter of Genesis in my daddie's old Bible."

Soon after its discovery, this document was tendered for Probate as the testator's real will. The case came on for hearing in December, 1925. A jury was sworn, the hearing began, and the court then adjourned for lunch. When the hearing was continued, one of the lawyers announced that during the interval an amicable adjustment of the issues had been arrived at, and that the new will would be admitted to probate without opposition. The following is taken from an official copy of the minute of the Judge presiding:

JUDGEMENT BY CONSENT.

In Re Will *of* J. L. CHAFFIN *Decd.*

NORTH CAROLINA, DAVIE COUNTY. In Superior Court, *December Term,* 1925.

JUDGEMENT, DECREE:

This cause coming on to be heard, and being heard, and the following issues having been submitted to the Jury "Is the paper writing dated Janu-

ary 16th, 1919, and every part thereof the last Will and Testament of the deceased—Jas. L. Chaffin?"

Answer—"Yes."

And the Jury having answered said issue Yes, It is now (on motion of E. H. Morris, A. H. Price and J. C. Busby, attorneys for the Plaintiffs) Ordered, Decreed, and Adjusted that the said last Will and Testament of James L. Chaffin deceased be recorded in the office of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Davie County in the Book of Wills, and that the Will dated November 16th, 1905, and probated on September the 24th, 1921, Will Book No. 2, Page 579, purporting to be the last Will and Testament of the decd. James L. Chaffin is hereby cancelled, rescinded, annulled and made void.

When the trial commenced Marshall the original heir had died, but Marshall's widow and son were prepared to contest the second will. However, during the luncheon interval they were shown the second will. Ten witnesses were prepared to give evidence that the second will was in the Testator's handwriting, and the widow and son themselves seem to have admitted this as soon as they saw it. At any rate they at once withdrew their opposition.

Mr. James Pinkney Chaffin's statement concludes as follows:

> During the month of December 1925 my father again appeared to me, about a week before the trial of the case of Chaffin *vs.* Chaffin, and said 'Where is my old will?' and showed considerable temper. I believed from this that I would win the lawsuit, as I did. I told my lawyer about this visitation the next morning.
>
> Many of my friends do not believe it is possible for the living to hold communication with the dead, but I am convinced that my father actually appeared to me on these several occasions and I shall believe it to the day of my death.

Certain confirmatory documentary testimony as to facts follows.[1] I only quote the neighbour's (Mr. Blackwelder's) statement:

> My name is Thomas A. Blackwelder. I am 38 years old and the son of H. H. Blackwelder. My home is on a farm in Callihan township about one mile from the place where Jas. L. Chaffin died in 1921. I think it was on July 6, 1925, that Mr. J. P. Chaffin, the son of Jas. L. Chaffin, and a neighbour of

[1] See *Proc. S.P.R.* for November, 1927, page 517 *et seq.*

mine, came to my house and asked me to go with him to his mother's home, and at the same time stated that his father had appeared to him in a dream and instructed him how he could find his will. Mr. Chaffin told me at the same time that his father had been dead about four years, and had appeared to him in a dream and made known to him that he should look in the breastpocket of his old overcoat and there he would find something of importance. Mr. Chaffin further stated that he had gone to this overcoat and had found a strip of paper in his father's handwriting, and he wanted me to go with him to his mother's and examine the old Bible. I went with him, and we made a search for the Bible and after some time we found it in a bureau drawer in the second storey of the house. We took out the Bible, which was quite old, and was in three different pieces. I took one of the three pieces, and Mr. Chaffin took the other two pieces, but it happened that the piece I had contained the Book of Genesis. I turned the leaves until I came to the 27th chapter, and there found two leaves folded inward, and there was a paper writing, folded in these two leaves, which purported to be the last will of Jas. L. Chaffin.

CLASS II.—PREVISION. AN INSTANCE OF PREDICTION

Episode of the House

> Few men have pondered long on these problems of Past and Future without wondering whether Past or Future be in very truth more than a name—whether we may not be apprehending as a stream of sequence that which is an ocean of co-existence, and slicing our subjective years and centuries from timeless and absolute things.
>
> F. W. H. Myers,
> *Human Personality*, II, 273.

Preliminary

It so happened that Lady Lodge was having tea with her friend Miss Clarissa Miles in her London flat at Egerton Gardens on 6th May, 1913; and by way of entertainment Miss Miles had also invited a professional clairvoyante, who went by the name of Madame Vera, to give what might be called a "reading" or intuitional discourse, without going into any

kind of trance. Nothing of importance, or indeed of any particular interest, was said, but my wife had been trained to take notes—such notes as she could without shorthand—of any such occurrence, in case subsequently it might be of interest. Her notes were quite rough, but were afterwards seen by our son Raymond, who was mildly interested in them because of something said about Italy, where he had been earlier that same year on a visit to friends. From these notes I extract the record of what Madame Vera said at the end of her discourse. I do not suppose that the original notes were verbatim, for the record is rather jerky and disjointed: I expect that only the salient points were jotted down. Anyhow, this is exactly what was *written at that date*, and copied out by Raymond during 1913, before the war:

> A house in the country, a happiness, a stream or river that runs at the bottom of the garden. The house seems long and low-built, straggling; a piece that leads down to water. A happy condition; a happy period. On a height; the garden goes down to water, a feeling of good luck. Old fashioned; a

church door. The rooms are old fashioned; no two rooms alike. Low steps, very funny, up a step and down a step. Some rooms long and narrow—all shapes. Something that will be associated with your life. Hall not large, house low, old oak. This house is where you are going to be. Large pictures hanging, old pictures. Wall opposite more like stone. It is in the country and hilly. Long way from the station. A summer house large that goes across, inside there is a table and chairs; the front is glass.

The family were rather interested in this rather full description of an imaginary home, and tried to fit it on to any house in the neighbourhood, without success. A church door seemed an impossible feature, if it were taken literally, but indeed none of the features seemed applicable to any house that we were ever likely to inhabit. Since my youth in the neighbourhood of Mr. Arnold Bennett's "Five Towns," I had always lived in London or Liverpool or Birmingham, i.e., in places containing modern universities, where I could earn a living and take part in education. It was quite improbable that I should ever bury myself in the country; and it seemed to be

a house deep in the country that was being described.

I must now skip some years in order to give some biographical details essential to an understanding of the episode. In 1914 we went with the British Association to Australia. The War broke out. Raymond was killed in the year 1915.

Long after this, in the year 1919, I was retiring from the Principalship of the University of Birmingham, and accordingly we were looking out for a small house or cottage to which we could retire when we had left the comparatively large family house, Mariemont, at Edgbaston. Through certain mediums, such as Mrs. Leonard, with whom Raymond's mother had occasional sittings, Raymond (now on the other side) expressed interest in what he called "our house hunting," and showed a knowledge of several houses which she had seen. For instance, he described a service-hatch or hole in the wall between dining room and kitchen in a house near Crowborough which she had been told of by a house-agent and had been to see. In May, 1919, he discussed one at Datchet, but thought we could do better, and hinted that we should not be

moving from Mariemont for a year. Ultimately we fixed upon a small Lutyens house in the Hampstead Garden Suburb, and negotiated for its lease. Raymond, however, was not altogether satisfied with it. He said the walls were too thin for peace and quiet, and that there would not be room for my books—which was certainly true. Nevertheless we arranged to take the house. Early that autumn (3rd July, 1919) my wife went to Vichy in France for a few weeks. While she was away, a reiterated message came through usual channels:

> Tell mother to stop house-hunting: I have found one, and am only waiting to push it to you.
>
> RAYMOND.

Quite independently of all this, while she was away in July, I went to pay one of my periodical visits for a few days to our friends Lord and Lady Glenconner. They were not then at Glen in the border country of Scotland, where we had often been, but at their smaller house, Wilsford Manor, eight or nine miles north of Salisbury in the Avon Valley on Salisbury Plain. The Plain is not flat, as

strangers might expect, it is a group of low ranges of chalk hills extending over the southern part of Wiltshire, and is drained by five rivers which converge from wide open valleys like the fingers of a stretched-out hand, and are united at the wrist near Salisbury on the South. Of these rivers (the Ebble, the Bourne, the Avon, the Wylie, and the Nadder) the Avon is the one which continues them to the sea at Christchurch, Hants. Near the water-meadows irrigated by it, and on the dry chalk, Wilsford Manor and a few other houses are situated.

One afternoon Lord Glenconner invited me to go for a walk, and in the course of that walk he looked in at an old farmhouse in the Avon Valley, on land which he had recently purchased from the Antrobus Amesbury Estate, adjoining his own on the North. He casually remarked that he was doing some alterations and had just built a porch. He had bought this land and house during the war, and had lent it to one or other of the officers on military duty at Salisbury Plain, and for that purpose had fur-

nished it. He had up a few old pictures, family portraits, sporting prints and the like, and was now engaged in making a few improvements: among others adding a porch to a comparatively recently changed front door, so as to protect it from the weather on the north side of the house. The workmen had about finished; it was in the hands of a caretaker. There were barns and kitchen-garden, but hardly any lawn, only what had been a straw-yard for cattle. This he was filling up and generally improving the surroundings, as he was now thinking of letting it. But, he said, he was rather particular about prospective tenants, as they would be such near neighbours (only half a mile away with fields adjoining); and, besides, most people who might want to live there would also want the fishing and shooting rights over the 700 acres of associated farm land, which he did not wish to let. In a casual way we went over the house together, and I was considerably taken with its simplicity, especially with its "down"-like surroundings, and with the view of the beautiful Avon Valley from higher parts of Salisbury Plain. I remember

saying to him as we continued our walk: "Why not let it to us? I should not want either to fish or shoot." To which he replied: "I should like nothing better, but it would not do for you, it is too far from a station, and probably too far from London." I rather agreed, as I had no idea of burying myself in the country.

One of my daughters, however, also came on a visit to Wilsford Manor before I left, and I took her to see the house and neighbouring Downs. We were both much taken with it. She was sure that her mother would like it, as she had always been enamoured of the Sussex scenery near Brighton; so, after a few telegrams to Vichy, I decided to take it, if a library could be put on the top of it by raising the roof. This was agreed to; and in due time the work was put in hand. Meanwhile I got rid of the pleasant house in the Hampstead Garden Suburb—a matter of no difficulty—and I took measurements of the rooms in Normanton House preparatory to moving in, say, six months hence, after Mariemont had been given up. We did not actually enter upon occupation till the autumn of 1920, after my long

lecturing tour in America at the beginning of that year.

Sequel

After we were settled in we were looking through a box of Raymond's papers, and we came across his old document, the copied-out record of his mother's private sitting with Madame Vera, rather more than seven years previously. We had been struck at once with the description of a house at the end of that sitting; and though it would not have fitted any other house that had been looked at, we now perceived that this one it fitted almost exactly. It *is* a long way from the station (about 9 miles); for though Amesbury station—on a branch line to Bulford Camp—is only 3 miles off, the only station on the main line which we really use is Salisbury. The river Avon runs close by, and a portion or branch of it lies at the bottom of the orchard, its occasional flow being regulated by hatches. There is a small amount of oak panelling in the entrance hall, which is also used as a dining room. Into this room the front door opens direct, with a descent of three steps, so that the floor of the room is below ground

level—an unusual feature, probably arranged some little time ago to give it extra height, when the space ceased to be a storehouse of agricultural implements (as old inhabitants remember) and became a living room. It is long, low, and narrow (40 feet by 13 feet by 9 feet high) and its ceiling has old oak beams almost worn through, which must have been there for centuries. There are oak panels between the windows, and oak shutters. A notable oak staircase, most of it old, leads from this hall to an upper floor, and continues up into what has recently been made into a library by removing the old rafters and raising the roof.

Some old pictures were also in the house when we entered on the tenancy, having been kindly allowed to remain, with some other furniture, until we had fully settled in. There is also a step out of the sitting room, and one along an upper corridor in an unexpected place, over which visitors occasionally stumble, so that one of them said to me spontaneously, "This house seems all up steps and down steps" —which, though an exaggeration, was like the phrase used by the seer. The kitchen-garden, which faces

the front door, is half surrounded by a chalk wall, thatched after the Wiltshire fashion; and this wall, of chalk marl, has a stone-like aspect.

The most remarkable of the agreements, however, is that the porch recently built to protect the entrance has a real church door to it, obviously an old one, of considerable thickness (uniform 2¾ inches), studded with bolts or rivets all over it, and with long hinges, two massive bolts, and an appropriate latch.

I inquired from my landlord about this feature, and found that after the new stone porch had been built round the front door opening to the drive on the north side of the house, it was felt that this porch was rather too open in front to the weather; so Lady Glenconner, on one of her visits to the house during the alterations, had said to the builder that the entrance would be improved by a second or outer door to the porch, and added that she knew of an old door that could be used for the purpose. This was in an out-house at Wilsford Manor, and had probably been laid aside when the church had been restored by the former owner of Wilsford.

Accordingly this fine old door was moved and put into position in the porch of the house at Normanton. It is still stained in patches, apparently from some use made of it by house-painters during the years of its seclusion. But note that it was only resuscitated as a door after the war; that is to say, long after the vision of prediction in 1913. At that time even the porch did not exist, and the house did not belong to the Glenconners. He had bought the Normanton property in September, 1915.

It ought, perhaps, to be added, that when alterations to Normanton House were being made in 1919, the Glenconners had no knowledge whatever of any prediction; neither did it recur to our minds till long afterwards. The porch and minor alterations were over and done before we ever saw the house or knew anything whatever about it. The roof was taken off and an attic library added early in 1920.

That practically all the other features mentioned in the prediction could apply so correctly to this house by chance, seems incredible; it seems still more incredible that the existence of a church door in the entrance porch to a specified dwelling-house could

have been foreseen before it was there! I prefer not to make any lame attempt to explain the incident.

As to the other minor details: A glazed summer-house with tables and chairs in it against the south front of the house can hardly be counted, since I put it there myself, together with a small green-house; though this I truly did without the least thought or memory of any statement in that direction. The prediction says "no two rooms alike." Well, the only two rooms which might strike people as similar are the small sitting or morning room and the drawing room, both on the ground floor facing south. They are roughly the same size, but there are differences. One room has two doors, the other only one. One has a raised floor, with a step up, so that it is warmer than the other. The chimney-jamb of one is unusually large. They are quite differently furnished. The long, low-built appearance of the house was more apparent before the roof was raised and an upper story added.

There are two fine long detached barns, the other side the lawn, which from some points of

view might be taken as part of the house, and are a striking feature. The house it not on a height, it is true, it is only raised well above the flats of the water meadows. The County of Wiltshire is mildly hilly or undulating, but only in the sense that all Downland is hilly. It is easy to go up half a mile of slope, say 230 feet up, and look down on this house in the Avon Valley, on one side, and towards Stonehenge (2 miles off) at a more level part of the plain, on the other. These last are the only features that might by a stringent critic be stigmatized as wrong. Yet it may be worth mentioning that recently an American poetess, after a short visit, sent a friendly greeting to "the grey house beneath the Wiltshire hills."

My friend, Viscountess Grey, hitherto mentioned as Lady Glenconner, permits me to give her name in connection with the incident, and has added some additional information. She herself lost her eldest son in the war, Edward Wyndham Tennant, of whom she has written a Memoir,[1] wherein he is

[1] *Edward Wyndham Tennant, 4th Grenadier Guards.* (Published at the Bodley Head.)

spoken of by his affectionate family name of Bim; and it is well known that she is in occasional communication with him through reputable mediums. She allows me to say that she was the more struck by the coincidence, when told of it after we had entered on the tenancy, because of notes taken by her at sittings with Mrs. Leonard during previous months; these appeared now to contain allusions to the matter. Her notes taken at sittings at that time contain such passages as: New People coming, he is glad about this; not building exactly, but alterations. Changes in the roof. . . . They are so glad about the neighbours. At this time another house on Lord Glenconner's property was about to be let, and the complete renovation of the roofing of several large barns had been in process, and the reference had been understood to allude to this, though at the time carrying small conviction. Later, Lady Grey says, in the light of subsequent events, these allusions and others of a like nature became both to Bim's father and to herself abundantly clear.

At a later sitting with Mrs. Leonard, near London, Raymond expressed joy that we had got the house

he had intended, and hoped that it would suit his mother's health and be a success: and so it has proved.

Remarks

The whole episode, so far as Raymond is concerned, is only one of many instances in which he has shown knowledge of current events and been of service; and so far the episode is simple and explicable enough. But how to explain the prevision of Madame Vera, if it was a prevision, given at a time when we had no thought of moving from the neighbourhood of a modern University city, and not the slightest idea of living in the country; and especially how it was possible to foresee the details of a house which at that time was in other hands, in full use as a farmhouse, I do not understand. Especially do I not understand the foreseen existence of old pictures in what would for us naturally be an unfurnished house—as indeed this would have been, when let, had not Lord Glenconner happened during the war to put some in to make it more friendly for the officers to whom he lent it. Nor can I in the least understand the foreseeing of a church door, which in

1913 was practically non-existent—in nobody's mind—in an outhouse or nag-stall, half a mile away. I can only vaguely surmise some kind of "planning," on the other side, to bring these things about. For, as I have said elsewhere, Inference from the present, and Planning for the future, are our two normal methods of prediction in the ordinary affairs of life.

Supplementary Note

One point of interest is, I think, worth amplifying. It is that to which I have already referred, namely certain anticipatory allusions, apparently to this episode, which were taken down by Lady Glenconner during her sittings with Mrs. Leonard in May, 1919. These references were so previous to the whole transaction that they were non-interpreted at the time. We had never seen or heard of the house, nor had anyone even begun to think of us in connection with it, until that walk with the first Lord Glenconner on a date which I find in my diary was the 12th of July, 1919. Lady Grey has allowed me to see the record of her Leonard sitting on the 1st of

May, 1919, and from this she has selected and transcribed the following:—

> Bim says, Do you know he has got something to do for his father shortly? Yes, he has. Something in a few weeks' time. He gives Feda the feeling of about the middle of the summer. To do with L.—important. Someone called L, he'll be connected with it. A surname, and a man. Bim says importantly connected with his father to do with this.
>
> In what direction? I (Lady G.) asked.
>
> Quite in a material way, and yet not only business, something happy, something bigger. You will both be so pleased and glad about this; but a little waiting before it can be completed.
>
> (And later on again:)
>
> The building going to be partly pulled down, Bim says, only partly; he feels so pleased about it; something about the roof, he says, more like rebuilding. It will make such a difference, he says, to you, this coming. Neighbours. They are so awfully glad this has been arranged.

CLASS III.—PSYCHOMETRY OR DIAGNOSIS

> We have obscure and novel facts to explain, and before we confidently assign them to psychical and transcendental causes, we must try and think of everything which the human body might conceivably discern or discover. . . . It is surely conceivable, then, that all our known sensibilities may form merely a kind of bull's eye;—the place where outer and inner influences oftenest touch our central sensorium;—whilst round this bull's eye all kinds of unclassified obscure sensations probably scatter.
>
> F. W. H. Myers,
> *Human Personality*, II, 269.

The illustration I select of the third class of incident, namely psychometry or diagnosis from an object, is too long to give in detail, except in the Proceedings of a Society such as the S.P.R., and I must be content with a summary. The experiment which yielded this incident was conducted during the

spring and summer of 1901, the year after the Crown had appointed me Principal of the then newly chartered University of Birmingham, so that I had left Grove Park, Liverpool, and taken another house at Edgbaston. Thus it happened that the case was managed by my skilled and confidential assistant in Liverpool, Mr. Benjamin Davies, who had for many years helped me efficiently in many ordinary physical researches.[1] The medium concerned was a certain Mrs. Thompson, who lived in a Liverpool back street and whose clientèle consisted mainly of poor people, to whom she gave sittings and advice. I had reason to suppose that her powers were genuine; and, accordingly, Mr. Davies had some test sittings with her, going alone and anonymously. He managed to calm her apprehension as to his object in coming, while still maintaining anonymity; and as soon as she was confident that he was not a police spy or a press agent, she gave him some remarkable sittings, in which, among other things, he records about eleven small anticipations of what was likely

[1]See for instance *Phil. Trans. Royal Society*, 1893 and 1897.

soon to occur in his life, seven of which he ultimately marked as being correct, while the remaining four he could not say were wrong. This, however, is beside the point. Suffice it to say that his preliminary sittings gave him confidence in her powers.

It so happened that among the Welsh community at Liverpool Mr. Davies had some friends or acquaintances, including one family which was troubled by having as one of its members a paralyzed invalid, whom I will call David Williams. This man lay helplessly on a sofa, doing little more than toss a cloth rag aimlessly from one hand to the other. It seems he had been a Welsh miner in the Transvaal, and when the Boer War broke out, he and other miners escaped from Johannesburg, took ship, and came to England. He was more or less ill all the voyage, and gradually got worse. Some accident must have happened to him while coming up the pit-shaft in the crowded cage. The general practitioner treated him as a case rather difficult to understand, a rather curious case of paralysis.

Anxious to help his frinds, Mr. Davies proposed to take some object belonging to the patient to the

medium, Mrs. Thompson. The patient's brother went with him, bringing two objects, one of them being the bit of rag or cloth which had been so thoroughly handled. The brother was not introduced in any way, and no information was given; but the objects were handed to the medium when she was ready to receive them. She immediately perceived that it was a serious case, and was rather chary of giving information. She was encouraged, however, because they really wanted to know what was the matter, and asked her if there had been an accident. Yes, she said, he got an accident in a deep, dark place, that the skull had been pressed in—at a spot which she clearly indicated by touching the back of the sitter's (Mr. Davies's) head; and she said there must be an operation. She located also a clot of blood near this spot.

None of this had been located by the general practitioner, but I thought it a good opportunity for a test. So I wrote to an eminent consulting surgeon, Mr. Robert Jones, now the well-known Sir Robert, who then practised in Liverpool, asking him if, as a favour, he would see the patient whose address I

gave, and ascertain what was the matter—without of course saying anything about the wholly unauthorized and unofficial "diagnosis" suggested by the medium. Though very busy he kindly went, found an injury to the skull, at the place which had been previously specified unknown to him, and after another visit decided on an operation. A diagram would show the locality of the wound, as specified in absentia by the medium, also the near-by spot where the trepanning took place, and the position of the asserted clot of blood. But when the operation was performed the surgeon did not find a clot, though on being asked, he said that there was nothing contrary to the idea that a clot had been there and been absorbed.

The patient partially recovered for a time, and was able to give some account of his accident. It is believed now that he hung over the edge of the cage and that his head received a blow from some iron projection as it came up the pit shaft at the Johannesburg mines, when the miners were hurriedly escaping at the outbreak of war. The surgical report is appended:

30th May, 1902.

I did operate on David Williams, making an opening from near where I had felt what seemed to me to be a depression in the skull. I noticed that there was some thickening and roughening of the bone removed and some adhesion of the dura mater to the bone itself. If there had been a blood clot it had practically all been absorbed although the appearance of the dura mater was quite consistent with the theory of a blood clot. On opening the dura mater one noted that the pia mater below seemed quite normal, and the pulsation of the brain was pronounced, negativing any theory of marked intra cranial pressure. He was very bad indeed when I operated, and the operation apparently made very little difference in his condition. For the last fortnight or three weeks I have not seen him, but on my arrival from France about the 11th of June I shall call upon him again and see as to his condition.

Yours, etc.

(signed) ROBERT JONES.

P.S. I forgot to mention that there undoubtedly had been an injury to the skull as shown by its inner plate. A little later on I may feel inclined to take a larger piece of bone away.

Many similar cases of mediumistic diagnosis are to be found in a book by Dr. Eugene Osty, translated by Mr. Stanley de Brath, and entitled "Supernormal Faculties in Man."

CLASS IV.—CONVERSATIONS

Specimen of recent Conversations about Post-mortem Existence; and a small test of Identity

> Then when death attacks a man, the mortal portion of him may be supposed to die, but the immortal retires at the approach of death and is preserved safe and sound. . . . Beyond question, the soul is immortal and imperishable, and our souls will truly exist in another world.
>
> PHÆDO.

Introduction

THE fourth episode I propose to recall is of a different character. It merely illustrates one of my conversations with Raymond about those on the other side and their post-mortem condition; this one being about the help they are sometimes able to give us, indeed about the mutual help which can be exchanged between those on that side and those on this. These talks are generally conducted with the coöperation and assistance of one whom I am per-

suaded is my old friend, F. W. H. Myers, from whom Raymond learns much, and with whom he co-operates as a sort of assistant; Myers himself chipping in occasionally to explain or amplify. (A record of part of the conversation follows later, but I must explain something first.)

I knew that Myers in his lifetime was interested in this idea of mutual help and communion through the veil or across the gulf; and that he had once or twice referred to a text at the end of the 11th Chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to the effect "that they without us should not be made perfect," which he sometimes quoted in the form of the Latin translation in the Vulgate. So, on an occasion when it seemed relevant to the particular stage reached by the conversation then going on, I thought it might be a good plan to quote this to Myers and see what he would say. Feda was the intermediary, and it is not easy to get back anything elaborate or foreign through her. She gives the sound as best she can. But any utterance of my own, Myers would probably be able to hear. I asked if he was listening, and then said, apropos of the recent conversation: "*Ut non*

sine nobis consummarentur" (I find that I ought perhaps to have said *ne* instead of *non*, according to one version.) Myers was reported as nodding his head, showing understanding, and then saying a few words in response, which Feda boggled over, so what I got down from her attempts was something like: —*Rebus in ora* (see below). Myers said "Not quite right"; but he let it go at that, evidently thinking that I should make it out in due time.

A week or two later, while reading the typed-out record, it occurred to me that he might be referring to the context of the passage in Hebrews. I didn't remember what the context was, but looked it up. The words immediately preceding are to the effect that "God has provided some better thing for us." It then goes on, "that they without us should not be made perfect." I wrote to my friend Dr. Rendall, ex-Headmaster of Charterhouse, asking him if there was anything in the Vulgate which would elucidate Feda's rough attempt at Myers's meaning. He suggested the words *nobis meliora;* which he thought might very well be Myers's hasty recollection of the essential words in the context, namely "better things

for us." For though the real version has it in the singular, *melius aliquid,* the plural does just as well. On the whole I am disposed to think that his suggestion is a good one. I do not press it or base anything upon it, except that it serves as an illustration of the kind of way in which Myers does sometimes respond. He might very likely thus show his apprehension of the Latin phrase, which, though so simple, was unintelligible, I am sure, both to Feda and to Raymond, and of course equally unintelligible to Mrs. Leonard in trance.

To lead up to this comparatively unimportant episode, I will now quote a portion of the relevant conversation; thereby taking an opportunity of exhibiting the fact that our talks from the other side are not limited to family doings and trivialities, but often touch upon higher or more general topics. I add a comment in square brackets occasionally, but otherwise leave the record as it was taken down by me, under some difficulties, at the time. Feda is Mrs. Leonard's control, and though less childish than she used to be, is still amusingly gay and irresponsible at times. It cannot be easy to transmit serious infor-

mation through her: that is why Myers usually prefers the slower but more definite table method, —a method which used to be employed occasionally even at Mrs. Leonard's. Feda's name for Myers is "Mr. Fred." Raymond sometimes calls him "Uncle Fred" in an affectionate way, but more often (especially at first), "Mr. Myers."

Extract from Record of Leonard sitting on 16th September, 1927

Feda is understood to be speaking, *reporting* what is said to her on her side, often reporting in the first person, or occasionally giving way to another control for a few sentences. After some talk about plans, she said that according to Mr. Myers a forthcoming book of mine would contain

> some psychic experiences . . . not only old ones but new ones too.
>
> *O. J. L.* Well, I am wanting to publish some of the talks with him and Raymond.
>
> Yes, not merely on evidential lines, but on generally interesting lines.

O. J. L. That's what I wanted to do.

You've given plenty of evidence, and many are satisfied with that. Now they want to know what we think, what we do, how we conduct our lives, and what we think of the things you're interested in, and so on. At least that's our idea of the book. . . . Raymond says, People often ask if we don't say anything interesting. They ask, do we always say only "You'll find a photograph in the third drawer of a desk you've never seen before." (Feda here interpolated: That's how he goes on! He's naughty!) They've had plenty about the great-aunt's unknown chest, and the photographs. Now they want to know about our ideas and our lives, and to what extent we can help you on earth.

O. J. L. You don't tell us much.

No time.

O. J. L. No, I wish I could have more sittings. [I have only about two, or it may be three, per annum with Mrs. Leonard.]

There is one thing I want to impress on you,—how much and to what extent we are allowed to help people on earth. We are allowed to help in any way which doesn't interfere with free-will.

If we saw you intending, or willing, to do something wrong, we shouldn't be allowed to pitch you down the stairs so that you broke your leg and couldn't do that wrong thing. That would be interfering with your free-will.

We are not allowed to hypnotize you and make you change your mind. But we are allowed to suggest certain things to you, and to bring certain conditions before you, in the hope that you'll change your mind, but we can't force you to.

The whole purpose of life is development, it's nothing else, it's quite simple. People ask "Why this? Why that?" The purpose of life is development. And free-will is the wonderful power which enables man to choose right from wrong. We can't choose for him. That's why we don't like coercing you, or telling people at sittings what they should do or shouldn't do.

O. J. L. Yes; but sometimes you have more information than we have, and can see ahead.

Yes. Yes. But all the time we are leading them the right way without coercing them; and directly you on the earth choose it, then we are allowed to help you in every possible way.

. . . . . .

They're wanting, too, to give a clear, not long but concise, idea of our surroundings. It wouldn't take us long, Raymond says.

Just in a word or two I want to mention something now [evidently going back to something that I had suggested quite hypothetically in a previous sitting, as one possible way of accounting for their apparently very similar appreciation of trees and other objects said to be existing on their side]:

You have thought that probably our world is the same world as yours, looked at from another side: another view of it.

O. J. L. Yes, is it?

Our world is so different from yours in some ways, it's rather difficult for us to look at it from that point of view; but I can see eye to eye with you on one point, which seems to bear on your theory, and that is this,—that everything that is necessary to man, everything that man in a sense makes his own, has an etheric duplicate. We see the etheric duplicate.

Take a chair as illustration. [In the Tate Gallery is a picture by Vincent van Gogh of a sort of ideal chair which had attracted my attention. I don't know whether that accounts for his selection of so

apparently insignificant an object. Nor does it matter for his purpose.]

It may be that the chair you see at home, your material chair, and the chair that we see, which is your chair on our side, the etheric chair, are one and the same thing really. Yet the etheric chair seems to be with us.

You've heard communicators surprised to find over here the table, or the chair, or the picture they were fond of. You would regard it as the same thing seen from another side.

O. J. L. Do you agree?

Father, that's where it's very difficult for me to say whether you are right or wrong, because time and space have so little meaning for us compared with what they have for you; but many things go to prove that you are right.

What Uncle Fred suggests is that the mental conditions, the different spiritual development, the different point of view, may create the illusion of distance or space.

That's right, he says, and in every sense that matters they do create a distance. It always seemed to me that I travelled at first. When I first passed over it, it seemed to me that I had to go a distance to

find you. I felt that I went from our place to a place where you were.

Now Mr. Fred's speaking [to Raymond], he says:

Yes, young man, that's quite correct. But don't you see this, that it was your point of view that made the distance? The distance doesn't seem so great to you, you don't notice it, now.

When you first came over you were struck by the facts that you were born into, and living again, in a new condition. It stamped itself on your mind as a new condition, a place separate from the place whence you came. So, when you thought of your father's home you thought of it as being an essentially different place. You had a sense of distance to overcome.

The reason you don't feel the distance now, is because you have bridged the illusory gulf so often.

Raymond says,—Yes, Well, father, it must be so, but I can't quite see the thing as Uncle Fred does, and say there is no distance from your world to ours. But Mr. Fred thinks there isn't.

Raymond says,—Perhaps later on I may feel it and see it just as he does. Mind, I haven't got the impertinence to say it isn't so. But I don't see it all like that.

O. J. L. Well, Raymond, now I want to ask a question.

Suppose you are looking at the etheric aspect of some object, and I take a hatchet and chop the thing to pieces,—what will happen to the aspect that you are looking at?

Father, it would depend very much upon—it's most important—on your attitude of mind when you destroyed it.

He went on to say that if it was a thing one was fond of, the etheric form might still exist; but that if it was smashed through dislike or temper it would be "submerged or drawn into the general, the general ether, the unformed ether, the ether you have not moulded, that you haven't given life to. You can mould an etheric body for a thing,—a piano, a clock, a desk,—by loving it and liking to have it with you; you imbue it with a kind of etheric life, you provide the pattern, the mental pattern, which gives it etheric form. Your thought about a thing provides a kind of pattern upon which the ether is formed and moulded."

O. J. L. A sort of converse of materialization? Akin to it.

O. J. L. Do you mean that you don't see material things unless we think about them?

Father, we don't see the material things. When we say you were doing so and so, it's your thoughts that help us. We can go to the theatre with you, and we can enjoy it. But suppose you were horribly bored, and not looking at the performance, we should get a poor idea of it. Unless, indeed, we used the power and thought of someone near you.

O. J. L. Then you see our things with our eyes?

We do. We can. But I must explain something. Can you understand that we don't only see things through you but because of you. [Like mediumship apparently.—O. J. L.] It's difficult to explain through Feda. [You know that] part of you can see without your eyes registering that you can see.

Seeing without seeing. One part of you must register and the other part doesn't. Some things only flit over the conscious mind into the subconscious. They don't make any impression on it. But we can use your subconscious registration of things.

O. J. L. Similarly I suppose that we see spiritual things through and because of you.

Exactly, Father, exactly, the same function. When you live consciously in touch with us and

with our lives, you are able to tap certain sources of wisdom which belong to our plane. You are meant to do that, meant to try and use sight and hearing on our side, as we do on yours. The more you can do it the higher you will go.

Mr. Fred says, it's really finding God through us. I don't mean you shouldn't find Him direct, but perhaps the most direct way to God is through us.

Can you go directly to anything? There's a series of links always between you and your objective.

If God is your objective, you can reach Him through us. One of the best ways you can reach Him, I think.

Raymond says, I feel that the more you on earth use the function of sight and hearing, the more we shall be able to see on your plane too. The more you extend your range, the more you enable us to extend our range.

O. J. L. I say, Raymond, I'm going to say something, by way of comment, that Feda will not understand and you won't understand, but Mr. Fred will, if he's listening. Is he listening?

Yes, he is.

O. J. L. Very well then.—*ut non sine nobis consummarentur.*

He agreed with it, and says funny words,
rebus in
rebus in tore tory
in ora hora
inora
rebus in something ora.

He shakes his head, and says, not quite right.

He thinks that it is important that the two lives, the physical and the psychical lives, should be blended more, more consciously; which would in a sense increase the etheric life on the physical plane.

You see, Lodge, it's desirable really to increase what we call the etheric life on earth, the more we increase, deepen, define, widen, and value, the etheric life on earth, even the etheric life of a chair or table as well as our etheric body, the less submerged we shall be in the animal and physical morass. We have been so submerged in the merely animal and physical aspect of life [that] we've neglected the etheric. When we understand the etheric value of things we shall no longer be ridden and driven by such material aspects as money. I feel that we shall hand on a heritage of better health to the next generation as we understand the ether.

O. J. L. Myers, physical beauty is not a morass.

> No, no. As you understand the ether better, you'll appreciate the physical and material even more,—your bodies, beauty, all the physical,—but you wouldn't be submerged in it, nor overcome by it, but would see it at its true value. The temporary side of life can be very beautiful, no matter how you understand the ether. You don't want to lose one of your children in the material sense, why should you? But when you see the etheric side of your child, or of anyone, you will be improving the standard of life on the earth. We should never despise the material, we should make it as beautiful as possible and appreciate it as much as possible.

The conversation then branched off to other things and soon ended.

It should be needless to say that I take these conversations as akin to a discussion between friends, none of whom is infallible but some better informed than others. They are not to be treated as oracular, but they are often suggestive. Any tendency to put too much faith in imparted information, attained by other than our own exertion, is to be deprecated. The unwisdom of this can be illustrated from ancient examples.

CLASS V.—REMINDER ABOUT ANCIENT EXAMPLES OF ORACULAR CONSULTATION

SHALL I conclude these illustrative examples of unorthodox mental phenomena by reminding readers of very familiar ancient instances of the practice of divination, and more especially of an apparently excellent test case arranged by one who in addition to the attainment of worldly prosperity had imbibed some of the wisdom of Solon. I will call it

An Early Effort at Psychical Research

It is sometimes casually said that Psychic Science is old. That is not true, but psychic phenomena are as old as humanity. Science itself is comparatively young, and Psychical Research is younger. Nevertheless it was not unknown to the Ancients. King Saul made a proper experiment by going to a medium anonymously; though the message he got was

far from encouraging. The medium was a kindly person who attended to his bodily needs, insisting on his having a meal, though she was in a state of alarm, firstly, at breaking the recently promulgated law, and, secondly, at getting a more vigorous manifestation than she had expected. Instances of consulting domestic seers or mediums (Gad, Iddo, and others), among the Hebrew Kings, are innumerable, and often they seem to have given wise advice.[1] In classical times also, attempts to resort to occult practices were common enough. The remarkable experiment made by Crœsus, who was king over a great part of Asia Minor, to test the power of some oracles before seriously consulting any of them, was fairly up to S.P.R. standard—assuming the account given by Herodotus is correct—so I will quote it from a citation in an old copy of *Light*.

Crœsus sent messengers to six different oracles, presumably the best and most famous of his day. These were scattered over the known world, from

[1]See for instance: 1 Samuel xxx. 7, 8; 2 Samuel v. 23, 24; vii. 4; xxi. 1; xxiv. 11; 1 Kings iii. 5; 1 Chron. xvii. 3; xxi. 9; xxix. 29; 2 Chron. xviii. 14; xxix. 25; xxxiii. 18; xxxv. 15; Isaiah xxx. 10.

northern Greece to distant Libya. The messengers were sent—

> by different ways, Crœsus designing to make trial of what the oracles knew, in order that, if they should be found to know the truth, he might send a second time to inquire whether he should venture to make war on the Persians. He dispatched them to make trial of the oracles, with the following order: that, computing the days from the time of their departure from Sardis (his capital), they should consult the oracles on the hundredth day, by asking what Crœsus, king of the Lydians, was then doing; and that they should bring him the answer of each oracle in writing.

Herodotus tells us that he does not know the six answers, but only the successful one from Delphi, given by "the Pythian," a trance-speaker of the famous Delphic oracle, the site of which is now familiar to many of our soldiers. He adds, however, that one other satisfied Crœsus, namely, "the oracle of Amphiaraus" (at Oropus in Attica), as being a true oracle. But the answer from Delphi was preferred, probably on account of its definiteness. This Delphic answer became famous, and Herodotus

gives it, couched as it was in hexameter verse. It runs somewhat thus:

> I know the number of the sands and the measure of the sea;
> I understand the dumb, and hear him that does not speak;
> The savour of the hard-shelled tortoise, boiled in brass with the flesh of lamb, strikes on my senses;
> Brass is laid beneath it, and brass is put above.

The test proposed by Crœsus is one that was carefully thought out, and special precautions were taken. For the messengers had been told to ask their question on the hundredth day from the date of their departure, and it was the same question for all. The question was —*What was Crœsus doing at that moment?* Clearly that plan, if duly carried out, forbade all collusion and all probing by the oracle of the minds of the messengers. The messengers themselves were entirely ignorant: there could be no "mind reading." Possibly Crœsus himself hardly knew what he would decide to be doing; and, being really anxious, was wise enough not to make up his mind

till the last few days. "He bethought himself of what it would be impossible to discover or guess at, and on the appointed day he cut up a tortoise and a lamb, and boiled them together in a brazen cauldron and put on it a cover of brass."

The sequel, as everyone knows, is not so happy; for Crœsus now trusted the Oracle unwisely. He sent another question relating to his projected invasion of Persia, received an oracular response capable of two interpretations, and acted on the wrong one with disastrous results. Though ultimately his conqueror, Cyrus, hearing him just before his imminent execution exclaim on the warning wisdom of Solon (Call no man happy till he's dead), magnanimously spared his life.

CHAPTER V

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION OR THOUGHTS ON MEDIUMSHIP

It seems necessary to insist . . . that agreement with conclusions of "common sense," or even of scholastic philosophy, does not in itself suffice to render an hypothesis absurd or untenable.

McDOUGALL,
Body and Mind, p. 363.

We are actually witnessing the central mystery of human life, unrolling itself under novel conditions, and open to closer observation than ever before. We are seeing a mind use a brain. The human brain is in its last analysis an arrangement of matter expressly adapted to being acted upon by a spirit; but so long as the accustomed spirit acts upon it the working is generally too smooth to allow us a glimpse of the mechanism. *Now*, however, we can watch an unaccustomed spirit, new to the instrument, installing itself and feeling its way.

F. W. H. MYERS,
Human Personality, II, 254.

ONE reason why people find it difficult to accept statements about mediumship, or to believe records of communications which purport to come from deceased people through the instrumentality of mediums, is because they can form no mental image of the process, so that it feels strange to them and impossible. Yet testimony as to the reality of the occurrence is bulky enough and is rapidly growing in volume, and people who have submitted themselves to the experience speak of it as feeling simple and natural enough.

Nothing but habit is necessary gradually to accustom us to communication with the dead, as it has already accustomed us to ordinary conversation with living friends; for if we analyze the process of ordinary conversation we can detect in it features which are nearly as puzzling as any which we have to face in so-called spiritualistic literature.

To make this clear I propose to ask my readers, or such of them as feel any difficulty in this respect, to bestow a little attention on the nature of our normal activities in this terrestrial life, especially on that familiar part of our activity which regu-

lates the interchange of intelligence and emotion.

Consider, therefore, what we all really know, but perhaps seldom bear in mind, about ordinary methods of communication.

On Methods of Communication in General

The common experience of humanity is that each individual consists of both mind and body, a mind for understanding and planning, a body for receiving stimuli and executing intentions. We also know that it is through our body that we act upon the surrounding material universe, and that our thoughts and wills are fruitless and inoperative unless some part of the body is set in motion.

Our conscious bodily activity consists in, and is summed up as, muscular contraction; and the result of such contraction is to move primarily our own limbs and secondarily such other portion of the earth's matter as comes into direct or indirect contact with them and is not too massive or too firmly fixed. The movement of matter—either the whole or some portion of a material object—is what we can accomplish; and we can accomplish nothing

else in the physical realm. If we move only a portion of a solid body we subject it to a strain, which may be an elastic strain and require the continuance of force for its retention, or may be a plastic yield resulting in permanent set. If we set in motion a detached piece of matter, that motion will continue, through its own properties, until resistance stops it. Everything we do in the physical plane can be summed up as the motion, and thereby the rearrangement, of matter.

Every other effect which follows from the movement—be it the tension of a spring, or the burning of a building, or the production of a sound, or the generation of an electric current, or the germination of a seed—follows from the inherent properties of matter, over which we have no control; an event may be planned and arranged for by us, but we can only accomplish our purpose by bringing together suitable pieces of matter so as to enable their properties to take effect in a desired way; the actual achievement of the result falls in no way within our power of direct accomplishment.

Our power over the physical world is limited to

initiating or regulating movements. Making use of energy which is otherwise running to waste, we can guide it into destined channels; and by this power of physical guidance, we can achieve a surprising variety of effects. Primarily and directly, however, we are limited to muscular action.

On the receptive side we are not so limited, for we are endowed with certain organs of sense, whereby we can appreciate the physical agencies which we know by the names "sound," "light," and "heat," as well as apprehend the simple stimuli of motion and force. We can receive impressions through our muscles and general skin surface, but we get them also through our organs of special sense. Any one of the above-mentioned physical agencies can be used for purposes of elementary communication. All that we have to do is to act on matter in such a way as to cause variations or fluctuations in the intensity of these agencies; for as is well known our senses do not respond to anything which continues perfectly uniform: they only appreciate change. We can signal by variations of sound or of light or of temperature, as well as by changes of

movement and pressure; though the temperature method of signalling is not, so far as I know, actually employed, save perhaps occasionally by a conjurer.

It is just possible that some of us can be responsive to a mere thought; but that is not yet a recognized method of communication, and for all practical purposes we may say definitely that if we wish to communicate with our fellows in a clear and intelligible way we must do it through the intervention of some physical process. We must do more than think the thoughts we wish to convey, we must speak them or write them; and to that end we must use a brain and nerve mechanism to actuate certain muscles in a guided and controlled fashion. In other words, we must so control a bodily machine as to cause it either to make conventional marks on a piece of paper or else throw the air into vibration in a pre-arranged fashion called language—the language being selected to suit the mental furniture of the auditors, so far as lies in the speaker's acquaintance with the over-numerous conventional codes.

We have grown so accustomed to this oral or pictorial method of communication that it feels to us not only natural but inevitable; it is, however, not really a simple process, and the more it is analyzed the more surprising it becomes. The thought, or the emotion, while it is being transmitted, has to take the form of an aërial or etherial vibration—aërial if acoustic means are employed, as in speech or music, etherial if an optical method is used, as in writing or painting. And there may be other intermediaries such as an electric pulsation, as when a telegraph wire intervenes as part of the transmitting mechanism. The whole manner of the operation is singularly mechanical. But note that in every case the physical process has to be interpreted mentally before it is finished; otherwise the oratorical or other effort wastes itself in producing merely a modicum of extra heat.

The perceptive power of potential hearers or readers depends first on their willingness to allow the physical stimulus to act upon their sense organs; it depends secondly on their knowledge of the code, and thirdly on the extent of their own sympathetic

and interpretative faculty. All three of these conditions are essential, in order that a physical stimulus may emerge as an idea. While from the transmitter's point of view the process of communication consists in so actuating and controlling the bodily mechanism with which he is provided as to represent his mental processes in the required physical form. Our familiarity with the operation ought not to blind us to its remarkable and wonderful character. When we consider what speech and writing and artistic production really are—regarded solely from the point of view of their physical nature—it is nothing short of amazing that ideas and emotions can be transmitted in any such way.

Undoubtedly the process must be regarded as mainly a mental one; for, once given the recognized code and the necessary intelligence, almost any instrument will serve as a vehicle of communication. A telephone diaphragm, for instance—which is a circular disk of thin sheet iron—can (surprisingly) take up and reproduce the complexity of all the vibrations needed for articulate speech or an

orchestral performance. The tones of every instrument are reproduced. Even a clicking lever, merely going up and down with wearisome iteration, speaks to the telegraph operator with no uncertain voice. A flag held in the hand, or the oscillations of a beam of light in the sky, can be made to transmit orders or information of great moment. A wavy line traced on a slip of paper by a glass siphon, leaving a streak of ink as the paper is drawn under it, is the usual method whereby intelligence is received by cable from the ends of the earth. Yet to the uninstructed spectator the trace of a siphon-recorder must look as unintelligible as it does to a savage. The mystery popularly attached to wireless telegraphy, as its inception, was an illustration of the fact that people in general are ready to recognize that physical methods of communication are strange and uncanny provided that they are conducted by some method with which they are unfamiliar. The method of shouting or of flag-wagging is equally mysterious in reality; only in that case we have grown thoroughly accustomed to the receiving instrument (the eye),

without, however, really understanding much about its mode of action. The reason of the retina's sensitiveness to etherial tremors is fully known to none.

Given two minds attuned to common knowledge, and instructed in the transmitting and receiving faculty—for it does not come by nature, witness the experience of deaf and dumb asylums—we find that almost any instrument will serve the purpose of conveying intelligence between them. All that is essential is that *some* physical process shall be set in action, some movement caused in the world of matter. Operation through the material world seems essential, at least so long as we have brains, though the fact that mind can act at all on matter is a most puzzling one. How the gulf between mental and physical is bridged; by what means a thought in the mind can successfully control a material organism; how our will or our idea can deflect or modify the motion of the smallest fragment of matter, be it but a little finger or a brain cell—all that remains at present absolutely

unknown. So also we have no theory to account for the interpretation of a physical stimulus back into the category of mental impressions.

Some Philosophers tell us that lack of understanding on our part, as to the kind of connection between cause and effect, in this case of interaction between the psychical and physical, is nothing exceptional: we realize the difficulty more easily than in ordinary cases, but it exists in all; and our mistake lies in not perceiving the difficulty everywhere.

So at least says Lotze, though I am not at all sure that I wholly agree. This is what he says:

> The kernel of this error is always that we believe ourselves to possess a knowledge of the nature of the action of one thing on another which we not only do not possess, but which is in itself impossible, and that we then regard the relation between matter and soul as an exceptional case, and are astonished to find ourselves lacking in all knowledge of the nature of their interaction.
>
> It is easy to show that in the interaction between body and soul there lies no greater riddle than in any other example of causation, and that only the false conceit that we understand something of the

one case, excites our astonishment that we understand nothing of the other.

Quoted in McDougall's *Body and Mind*, p. 207.

I agree that we cannot fully understand the interaction of one piece of matter on another, not even what we call the force exerted by one atom on another, unless we take electric or magnetic fields—that is unless we take the ether—into account. And I urge that if any rational understanding is to be arrived at about the interaction of mind and matter, that some great and substantial physical entity will have to be appealed to as the intermediary in some at present unknown way.

But though the manner of mental and physical interaction is unknown, the fact itself is certain and familiar—so familiar as to arouse no attention and to be treated as commonplace. We, ourselves, that is our mental and spiritual selves, do as a matter of fact guide terrestrial energy, set matter in motion, alter its configuration, and produce effects which would not otherwise occur. We share this power to a certain extent with all animals, who likewise produce specific structures—such as birds'-

nests and cobwebs and shells. But among these animal activities are some which are specifically human, especially those physical signs which our part of humanity has agreed upon, and which are intelligible to those of our own race. The instrument through which we achieve these and all other results on the physical plane is primarily the brain-nerve-muscle system contained in or constituting the greater part of our bodies. Somehow or other we employ or stimulate the brain centre, and an impulse is sent along its fibres at a measurable rate, which on arrival causes a given muscle to contract in a determined way. The process may rightly be considered as miraculous as everything else, no more, no less; but—whatever its character—it occurs, though we cannot analyze it completely. We can, however, say that unless *some* physical movement is caused, be it but the raising of an eyelid or the twitching of a nose, nothing at all is conveyed (nothing at least unless we admit the possibility of telepathy, which is not one of the usual methods) ; while if the control is such that an external piece of matter, such as a telegraph key or a

semaphore or a pointer, or still better a pen or pencil, can be moved at will, there is no limit to the intelligence and the emotion that can thus indirectly be conveyed.

All the transmitting methods, however employed, pre-suppose another receptive person, endowed with a proper instrument for receiving the physical impression and attentive enough to interpret it mentally. We can thus stimulate the mechanism and the mind of others easily enough, if only we have the use of a transmitter.

Some instruments are better than others, but almost any instrument will serve, and it is clear that the larynx with its appendages is only more highly specialized for the purpose of transmitting messages than any other piece of matter, for it is the instrument which we have specially trained and grown accustomed to.

Possibility of Vicarious Use of Instrument

We can next go on to admit that every person has a larynx and hand connected with a brain-nerve-muscle system akin to ours, and that some have de-

veloped the use of these instruments by education in much the same way as we have. Is it possible that the transmitting mechanism of another person can ever be employed by us instead of our own?

Now if a physicist or chemist enters another person's laboratory and there tries to perform some experiment or conduct some inquiry, he would find considerable difficulty, for he would hardly know where anything was; but he could do it after a fashion, though of course he would be taking a great liberty. He would see familiar objects, such as balances and beakers and bottles, and he would know what most of the things were for; he would find many that he did not want, and would miss some that he did, but could make shift to select and adapt them more or less to his own purposes and use them in his own way.

It becomes a question therefore whether this self-possessed bodily laboratory, to the use of which each person has grown accustomed, can by any possibility be set in operation and used by an alien intelligence, or by someone other than the owner; in other words, we must ask whether a thought or

idea in the mind of one person can excite any movement or bring about any response in the mechanism of another.

The experimental fact of telepathy seems to hint that something of the kind is possible. Usually the telepathic action seems to occur between mind and mind, and the translation from mental to material process may be conducted in the ordinary way. But the still obscurer power of *telergy,* to which in appearance we are sometimes driven for an explanation of observed fact, seems to show that the transmissive apparatus of an exceptionally sensitive or specially endowed person may occasionally be worked by another mind, provided the owner is complacent enough to vacate part of his organism and generous enough to allow its employment by another.

Whether the operation be performed telepathically or telergically in any given case is a detail, and whether the operation is rare or frequent is another; the important thing is that the bodily mechanism of some people, though usually under their own control, is not exclusively so. The facts of mul-

tiple personality have long ago hinted at control by other and alien intelligences—not, indeed, always friendly; and the power which is thereby pathologically demonstrated and recognized as restive and uncontrolled, can in happier circumstances and under better and more healthy conditions be utilized for purposes of kindly service.

Mediums are persons who have the faculty of allowing their machinery to be set in operation by minds other than their own. Physiological response to stimulus from another mind: that is what mediumship is; and whether it is a real faculty or not is a question of evidence. I say distinctly that—so far as I see at present—its real existence is the simplest hypothesis that can be framed to account for certain phenomena now known by experience to a great many people. It does not appear to be even a rare faculty, though it differs in degree, and it is probably susceptible of cultivation and improvement. Many persons are able to obtain what is called automatic writing—one of the simplest forms of useful mediumship—that is, to allow the hand and arm to be controlled by an apparently alien though

friendly intelligence—their own intelligence being otherwise alert all the time and only locally withdrawn from interference. Trance is a further withdrawal of conscious attention; and some persons are able, during trance, to allow their voice organs to be employed for the transmission of speech, and occasionally for the expression of ideas quite out of their normal ken. Of these utterances they have no recollection on awaking out of trance, though presumably there is always some deposit or record in a portion of their brain which might be evoked by suitable means. The state of trance differs from the hypnotic sleep, though it has many features akin to that; but whereas in the hypnotic state the patient is subject to suggestion or is more or less controlled by a living person, the striking fact about the trance state, or one special variety of trance state, is that the organism can then sometimes be manipulated by discarnate inteligences, i.e., by persons whose own bodily mechanism has been completely destroyed.

There seems to be every degree of control, and every variety of physical response, from the most

elementary tipping of a table or semaphore arm, to writing or speaking intelligible sentences; and sometimes, though seldom, ideas are expressed in what, to the medium, is an unknown tongue. The facility with which communications can be made depends a good deal on the power and skill of the communicator, and on the understanding of the recipient; but it depends also on the habits and aptitudes of the physiological instrument employed. It can very easily be used to utter habitual phrases and commonplace sentences, but to get it to convey recondite ideas or to employ unusual language is much more difficult, and through an uneducated instrument may be merely impossible.

Meaningless code words again, such as proper names, are nearly always found difficult, and require a special affort. In fact, the experience seems closely akin to the dictation of a telegram through a telephone: familiar phrases are easily picked up, while out-of-the-way words and proper names may have to be repeated several times, and sometimes laboriously spelt; so also sudden questions interjected in the middle of a message have the effect of confus-

ing the communicator, and anything like a switch to another subject may easily spoil the clearness of a message, unless it is one that had been previously written down and is being transmitted mechanically.

In every case, the most familiar as well as the most extraordinary, it is important to realize—I must repeat this—how remarkably mental the essential part of the process of communication always is, whether it be by articulate speech or writing or by pictorial representation. The means employed by a painter, for instance, to convey his meaning is to arrange pigments in a certain way, just as a musical composer designs future sounds—which he does by virtually writing down instructions sufficient to enable a skilled person hereafter to reproduce the sounds in the way intended. And even then, unless this reproduction is done in the presence of a suitable recipient—one with what we call a cultivated eye or ear—the message intended by painter or executive musician fails to be delivered. All that is in the picture, every intonation in the music, can be seen or heard by a savage or an animal, but in

them, as in the Philistine, no response is evoked. To see a picture properly, or to enjoy music, needs a certain faculty, a kind of mental alertness and sympathy: and without that psychic response, nothing important is conveyed. Our appreciation of a work of art depends on what we bring to it.

Hence we need not be surprised that when psychic attunement is forthcoming the physical part of the transmission can be managed with ease. A gesture may convey a good deal, without speech. Lip reading is often employed by deaf people. The mere inspection of spots on lines can appeal to a skilled musician as harmony and melody. Black marks on a sheet of paper constitute the physical side of a poem. The mere tippings of a table are known to be able to convey both intelligence and emotion—however strange the fact may appear. The singular faculty of telepathy shows that in extreme cases even the slightest physical stimulus can be dispensed with; though then naturally, under present conditions, the process is usually slow and uncertain. So it is not really so very surprising that a complete bodily organization, even though be-

longing to another person, can with practice be employed by a discarnate intelligence; assuming that any such exist and are able and willing to convey to people still associated with matter some message of affection or some ingenious proof of their continued existence and identity.

If our relatives and friends exist at all, after they have left the body, they have all the mental or psychic furniture needed for communication: all that they lack is the physical instrument; and hypothetically the presence of a medium seems to provide that. Assuming that they can operate on an alien physiological organism, after the same sort of fashion as they used to operate on their own—not in the least knowing what they were doing but simply doing it—the rest is easy: they are acquainted with our codes and modes of thought, and if they can contrive to pull physical detents in anything like the old familiar way, it is natural to expect that we shall be able to understand.

We must indeed put ourselves in a position of receptiveness, and give them the necessary attention, or they will be helpless. Sometimes they may

make special efforts to attract our attention—to ring us up so to speak—but, to get anything like a coherent message through, there must be co-operation on both sides.

The messages got through are often simple, sometimes only words of affection, followed by attempts to establish their identity, against lifelong and traditional incredulity, by aid of trivial reminiscences and characteristic phrases. These simple halting utterances, transmitted through unwonted channels with evident difficulty and received with calculated silence and often with hardly concealed disbelief, are to the Church a stumbling-block and to Science foolishness, but to the bereaved a power and a comfort of inestimable value.

CHAPTER VI

CAN IT BE POSSIBLE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE DEAD?

The time is ripe for a study of unseen things as strenuous and sincere as that which Science has made familiar for the problems of earth.

Science, as we know, will not rest with complacency in presence of the exceptional, the catastrophic, the miraculous . . . Her highest ideal is cosmic law;—and she begins to suspect that any law which is truly cosmic is also in some sense evolutionary.

The discovery of telepathy opens before us a potential communication between all life. . . . And if, as our present evidence indicates, this telepathic intercourse can subsist between embodied and disembodied souls that law must needs lie at the very centre of cosmic evolution.

Have our notions of the dignified and undignified in nature . . . guided us in the discovery of truth?

> Would not Aristotle, divinizing the fixed stars by reason of their very remoteness, have thought it undignified to suppose them compacted of the same elements as the stones under his feet? May not disembodied souls, like stars, be of a make rather closer to our own than we have been wont to imagine?
>
> F. W. H. Myers,
> *Human Personality,* II, Chap. IX.

People often wonder about the process of mediumistic communication, and may doubt whether it is legitimate even if it were possible to talk familiarly, through any channel, with those whom it seems customary to regard as either sacred or extinct. As a matter of fact they are neither: and the sooner the world realizes this truth in a rational way, the better both for them and for the world. Difficulties due to long habit and tradition must be gradually overcome, partly by direct experience, but in the first instance by reading and study. So I address myself to those who feel some difficulty—perhaps even a religious difficulty—about the bare idea of posthumous communion, and who seriously ask the question: Can it be possible to hold converse

with the dead, or for them in any way to communicate with us?

No reply can be given on *a priori* considerations, unless it be a contemptuous negative based on too hasty a guess about the significance of the main word in the query. If it be true that "the dead know not anything," they practically have no longer any personal existence, and it cannot be possible to communicate with nonentity. But this is reasoning in a hind-before or preposterous manner. The right method of attack is to ascertain first, by experiment and observation, whether communication is possible; and then from that fact, if it becomes an established fact, to infer that after all the dead do know something, and that they have a personal existence.

But then the obvious question arises: How can it be possible to communicate with anyone, however intelligent, who possesses no physical instrument or organ for the conversion of thought into act? How can it be possible to appreciate mere thought?

A partial answer is given by the experimental discovery of telepathy, which appears to be a direct

process of transmission from mind to mind. But still, for any kind of reproduction or utilization or conveyance to others, a physical process is necessary; and therefore, so far as we know, a physiological mechanism is necessary.

An instrument of some kind there must be; but it does not follow that the instrument employed need necessarily be the property of the communicating intelligence. A musician deprived of his favourite instrument might learn to play on another. Without an instrument of some kind—be it only a pen—his soul might be full of music but it would be silent and unapprehended, it could not be reproduced, it could not even be written; but an inferior or a strange instrument would be better than nothing, and might once more confer upon him some power of utterance.

Now the facts of multiple personality show that a single human body can, under exceptional circumstances, be played upon by several intelligences, not only by one: the normal occupant can, as it were, be ousted sometimes, and its place taken by others. That is the appearance; and the appearance

may turn out to be nearer reality than had been thought likely.

There are certain people whose value for the purpose of enlarging our experience is much greater than has yet been recognized, who self-sacrificingly allow the bodily part of themselves to be employed in conveying messages, which are received telepathically or they know not how, from intelligences other than their own. Their own personality goes into abeyance or into trance for a time, while their body and brain continue active, and thus messages are transmitted about facts previously unknown to them, and which subsequently may leave no accessible deposit in their memory.

A person thus employed as a transmitting mechanism for another intelligence is called a "medium." There are various grades of mediumship, and it is not always associated with complete normal unconsciousness, by any means; but in all cases it appears to be a healthy and useful variety of what in pathological cases is called "multiple personality." The secondary personality in temporary control need not be obtrusive or troublesome, it

may be well-controlled and amenable to reason and convenience, but it is not the normal intelligence of the medium, and the stratum of memory tapped is a different one. Facts known to some other person come to the front: facts familiar to the medium recede for a time into the background. The mind and memory thus tapped can occasionally be traced to an ordinary incarnate person; but the material or flesh body does seem to be an obstruction, if only because sensory methods of communication are so customary and familiar. It turns out to be really easier for the medium's organism to be controlled by a discarnate intelligence, that is, by one who, having gone through the complete process of dissolution or dissociation from matter, is commonly spoken of as "dead."

Whatever other and higher methods of communion there may be—among them what is spoken of as inspiration—this rather commonplace utilization of a medium's powers is a genuine one; and many there are who are familiar, by direct first-hand experience, with messages thus received. The facts selected for mention or transmission in such

cases are often trivial domestic occurrences, such as have no public significance, but which are well adapted to prove the identity of the person who remembers them. The triviality of the incidents recalled matters nothing, if they have this identifying character. Events of importance are not nearly so useful; for either they can hardly be verified, or they are of the nature of public knowledge. It is the trivial and the domestic that give the evidential clues and personal traits desired by sorrowing survivors.

Of mediumship there are many grades and varieties. The trance condition above spoken of is one of the most complete forms; but automatic or semiconscious writing can be obtained by some people without letting more of the body than the hand go out of customary control. The instrument in that case is the hand supplemented by pen or pencil; it it worked no doubt by the muscles in a normal way, but it is not guided as to the sense of the message by the normal mind of the person working it. Sometimes the pencil is fixed to a larger piece of wood, so that the muscular action can be simpler

and less like that employed in ordinary writing—a method called "planchette." Sometimes such a piece of wood is constructed so as to be able to point to printed letters instead of writing them. And sometimes a rather more troublesome but still simple form of physical instrument is used, and the message comes in the form of bare signals—akin to flag-wagging or key-depressing, or in the case of those who do not know the Morse code, by repeating the alphabet to the tilts of a table which stops at the intended letter. Table-tilting seems like an old and despised amusement rather than a serious method: it would seem more adapted to mere games, but with care and sobriety even this forms a possible vehicle for communications of a definite kind. A table is manifestly only a variant, a clumsy and bulky variant, of a planchette, or again of a pen or pencil, which is also a bit of wood actuated by muscles.

Modes of converting thought into physical movement are innumerable, and it matters but little which of them is used. The hand, the larynx, the arm muscles, the throat muscles, are all pieces of

matter amenable to mental influence through the brain and nerve mechanism associated with them. How they can be actuated by mind, is a puzzle; but the fact that they can be so actuated is undeniable. The element of strangeness about any kind of communication is not that matter is moved in accordance with a code, so as to reproduce thought in another percipient mind; for that is equally true of speech and writing; the strangeness of supernormal instances is that the substance of the communication is alien to the person transmitting it, and is characteristic of some other person who is dramatically and vividly represented as really desirous of sending intelligible information, or else an identifying and comforting message, and who employs such bodily organs and physiological mechanism as he may be permitted for the time to use.

Now let me indicate the kind of messages which may be received.

Some of these relate to facts and experiences "on the other side,"—the kind of life lived there, the surroundings, the conditions, the persistence of vivid interest in affairs of earth, and the difficulties

and to some extent the rationale of communication. Plenty of this kind of attempted information is recorded in books. But all these belong to what we call "unverifiable" topics—we have no means of testing the assertions or ascertaining what amount of truth the messages contain; so that they must be cautiously treated. Suffice it to say that the invariable assertion is that the conditions on "the other side" are much more like conditions here than the communicators themselves had expected. They speak of flowers and animals, birds and books, interest and beauty of all kinds. They assure us that they know very little more than we know, that their character and personality are practically unchanged though still progressing, that they have not suddenly changed into something supernal—nor infernal either—that they are themselves just as before, with tastes and aptitudes not dissimilar, but that they are subject to conditions happier and more conducive to progress, freer from difficulty and gratuitous obstruction, than when they were associated with matter.

They also say that things round them are quite

solid and substantial, and that it is the old material things which now appear shadowy and evanescent. So they seem barely cognizant of happenings on earth, save when definite duties are allotted to them to help those who are coming over, or when we are thinking of them, or again when they make a spontaneous effort to get through to those they have loved and left behind. They are keenly susceptible to friendly feeling and affection, and they are less shy or chary of expressing their feeings than they were down here. They do not appear to be in another region of space, but are interlocked and closely associated with this order of existence. The same unconscious constructive ability as did in the long course of evolution succeed in building up their old visible organism by arranging particles of matter, seems able to continue its task under the new conditions, and has constructed another body or mode of manifestation out of such substance as is there available—the ether it may be hypothetically supposed to be. This constructive ability probably belongs not only to human and animal but to all forms of organic life, so that the surroundings, in what

some are beginning to think of as an etherial world, need not be very different from those familiar to us in this realm of matter—that realm which is now so real and all-absorbing to us, which excites our keenest admiration, and yet of the real mode of construction of which we know so little.

However all that may be, the first messages which come through are not of a descriptive character; they represent not attempts to inform, but attempts to convince, to make us realize that lost ones are still vivid and active, and that they are happy so far as we will let them be. They grieve with our sorrow, but otherwise find their new life full of interest and helpfulness and a kind of joy.

The first messages which come through, therefore, are messages of affection; and next come those little family reminiscences which, to those for whom they are intended, are often very clear and satisfying, although to outsiders they require so much explanation that they lose much of their force. References to pet names, to pet animals, to occurrences on holiday excursions, small accidents or *contretemps,* all these things seem to jump to

the memory when an effort is made to think of some identifying message; and although names are rather difficult to get clearly and correctly, through the majority of mediums, and although the importance of names as evidence may easily be over-estimated, still names, too, are often spontaneously given, especially names of an intimate and private character. A sudden question, such as asking for a predetermined test, is apt to confuse and blur clearness. Everyone must know how easy it is to break a thread of ideas down here.

Over-anxiety on the part of a sitter is by no means helpful. Calmness and placidity are. Early messages, however, are often stimulated by a keen desire apparently felt to relieve the mind of survivors of some anxiety, some suspicion, some misunderstanding, or some trouble, which is casting a shadow over their lives. To such things departed friends seem peculiarly sensitive, and often make great and energetic efforts to get comfort through to a particular person whom they perceive to be thus afflicted.

How they know, may well seem to be a puzzle;

but of course such things are obscurely felt also in this life, and they may come into more prominence and arouse more remorse when easy opportunity of explanation is ended. I should judge that remorse is rather a notable feature of the discarnate mental state, if there is good cause for it; and that the feeling may be akin to that sadly felt by us sometimes in the night-watches.

The possibility of telepathy, also, whereby mental impressions of deep-seated character may influence other minds—even though discarnate—seems likely to furnish another way in which feelings of this kind may hypothetically be aroused. Whatever the method, perception of the sentiments of survivors is undoubtedly a fact; and one great merit of the communications received in such cases is the relief and comfort they have brought to the feelings of those on both sides of the veil.

In times of widespread distress such messages are very necessary, and they are numerous. In all sorts of ways they come. Youths struck off in full vigour of manhood are not likely to rest contented if they find their loved ones sorrowing unduly for their

loss, and spoiling what remains of their lives here. They may be sceptical of their power to get through —they often are; but if by the help of friends, or by any other means, they come to perceive the possibility, they will strain every nerve to awaken in those still here a corresponding desire; so that in some form or other, sooner or later, communion —it may be of a very subjective character—can be accomplished.

In a fairly well-known book on life and death I give examples of messages which prove the survival of personal identity and of memory and affection and character beyond death. I give examples, indeed, of family conversations which have been held with Raymond and others; but these must be considered and treated as a whole: it is not useful or fair to pick out bits and quote them out of their setting.

There is no need for such conversations to be too frequent or too persistent. Once those on both sides are made fully aware of undying interest and affection, the few years of separation can be en-

dured; and the main work of life, whether on that side or on this, can be attended to.

The value and importance of the present terrestrial existence is fully recognized by our friends on the other side. It would be a poor return for the privilege of occasional communication, and an especially ungrateful recognition of the noble and self-sacrificing spirit in which so many in recent times have gone to their death, if lamentation for them—or even an eager desire for communion—were allowed to sap energy, or to interfere with the full activity of every kind of service such as is possible to us in our present grade of existence.

Finally it may be asked why, if those other intelligences exist, we have not known about them all along. But surely many a Seer, many a Saint, has known about them, has been in communion, and has felt their influence. Poets, too have had their inspirations. Yet wonder is sometimes expressed, even by those who are inclined to admit their existence, that they do not tell us more about their activities, and make us understand the nature of their surroundings. The answer is, first, that they

have told us more than is generally or widely known; and secondly, that confessedly the telling is not easy. So I propose to conclude this chapter with a childish fable.

THE FLOUNDER AND THE BIRD

A solitary flatfish flopped its way to the edge of a Scottish loch to bask. A swallow happened to flit by, grazing the water in its flight to and fro. The fish gaped in astonishment at the dimly seen apparition and murmured to himself: "So, after all, there really are living things up there. I always thought there might be; there have been shadows and indications; our free swimmers have hinted at something. But it is all fanciful and unreal; it is safer to lie firmly on the ground; we can at least make sure of our mud and sand: the rest is imagination." Then, as the swallow flitted by again, he inquired, "What are you? Have you fins?"

The swallow answered briefly: "We don't swim, we fly," and then added goodnaturedly, as if in response to an unspoken question, "It's much the same thing really, only it's finer and fleeter and hap-

pier. We have feathers such as you could not dream of, we soar above the earth, and can travel immense distances. Even your free swimmers don't know half that is to be known."

The fish was astonished and silent for a time, but soon recovered his usual presence of mind, and began to answer volubly and without hesitation, "This is most extraordinary; we haven't really believed in your existence. A few of *us* say they are able to fly, at least for a short time, and have told us of catching glimpses of other creatures during their flights, but of course they are not believed. They tell us that when up there they can actually see ahead, so as to foretell the coming of those dark hulls that perturb us occasionally; but they are often wrong. We hold that flying ought to be suppressed; we will not allow ourselves to be deceived."

The swallow hovered a moment on hearing this last confession, and said with an upward glance, "You would do well not to be deceived, but there may be more than one kind of deception. Are you on your guard against self-deception? You little know all the glories of existence."

"Do *you* know all?" asked the flounder, trying to rear its head out of the water, and getting suffocated in the process. "Is everything plain to you up there in your soaring freedom? Tell us what your world is really like."

"I cannot tell you," answered the swallow: "you would not understand. It is something like your world, only far more beautiful. You, too, have beautiful things down there, if you look for them, or if you listen to your free swimmers; they tell you of bright stones and seaweed and shells; even your own scales are beautiful. But we—we find trees and flowers and fruits; we fly over glorious mountains, and rejoice in the showers and the sunshine, the rainbows and the dew; we build nests on barns and churches; we . . ."

"I don't know what you are talking about," interrupted the fish. "What on earth are churches?"

"Ah! There you go beyond my knowledge," said the swallow. "There is much that even we do not know. We cannot tell why they were erected; they are something like barns, but have more string-courses, and ledges; they are somehow different;

they seem to represent a view of the universe higher even than our own."

"Well!" said the flounder to himself, as the swallow's utterance trailed away into silence. "He can't tell us what his surroundings are like, and yet he speculates about regions still more incomprehensible. No! It is all too vague and indefinite. We did right not to believe in anything beyond this home of ours. If I were to tell the others that those flying fish have spoken some kind of truth, I should be laughed at. Better say nothing. And yet —well, even I dimly remember that in my infancy I used to swim more freely. . . . Alas! those early gleams have died; I must be content with the light of common day." So saying, he began to flounder back, and settle himself once more into his mud.

But his experience was not wholly lost; he could not resist occasionally blurting out something of it, in spite of the contempt of his fellows; and he really felt happier, though more conscious of ignorance, than he was before. He still wondered, however, why the bird could not more clearly enlighten him as to the nature of the world beyond.

CHAPTER VII

THE PROSPECT: A BRIEF SUMMARY

Will my tiny spark of being wholly vanish in your deeps and heights?

. . . . . .

Thro' the gates that bar the distance comes a gleam of what is higher.

(Lines from Tennyson's last poems.)

IN CONCLUSION let us take a rapid survey of the ground that we have traversed, and envisage what lies ahead. Our views have begun to enlarge in all directions, rising from attention to the earth only, to comprehend what is happening in the infinite cosmos of which the earth is an integral portion, and to penetrate the interstices of the very atoms of which it is composed. We find one system of laws throughout, ruling both the great and the small; the earth is no special exception. So now we are

beginning to feel impelled to extend the same cosmic enlargement to the domain of life and mind. We seek for the imperishable, the perfect, the substantial; and in space itself we find those attributes. That, and not matter, is our permanent habitation; therein we find the physical vehicle which we use now, and shall continue to use forever.

Our material bodies wear out and have to be left behind; no material objects are permanent, they always decay sooner or later, but the soul of a thing is not in the material presentation.

The material side of a picture is canvas and pigment, nothing else would be detected by a microscope; but to such an examination there is no "picture," the "soul" or meaning—the *reality*—has evaporated when the material object is contemplated in that analytical manner. So it is with our bodies; dissected they are muscle and blood-vessel and nerves—a wonderful mechanism; but no such examination can detect the soul or mind.

Mind utilizes and dominates matter; it uses it for purposes of demonstration and achievement, employs it as a vehicle of manifestation, but it is

a deadly mistake to identify thought and personality with any assemblage of atoms. The brain is a pulpy mass of matter, mysteriously contrived so as to re-act to thought, to receive and transmit impressions; but the brain does not think, it does not plan, nor see, nor hear. Only the mind does these mental things, the brain is its instrument. Without it, and its nervous and muscular co-ordination, we should be powerless to move matter, and therefore powerless to speak or write or convey our impressions or express our thoughts.

Our whole material body is an assemblage of atoms cunningly put together so as to make a structure of wonderful ingenuity and beauty of adaptation; every part is allotted to its proper function, and we live here and now by the co-operation and harmonious working of the whole. That is how we live here on earth, and how we make ourselves known to others who are in like case.

The particles which compose our body were collected together from vegetable and animal substance, and arranged by the indwelling of psychic entity which may be called life or soul, and which

we do not pretend fully to understand. But therein lies the self, the character, the memory; not in the mechanism.

The ear does not hear, it is the instrument of hearing: in itself it is mechanism, as a telephone is mechanism. The eye does not see, any more than a photographic camera sees; it is we who see and hear, by means of these receiving instruments. They get stimulated by vibrations, and strangely enough we can interpret those vibrations.

We intrepret sense-indications into a landscape, or a work of art, a poem or painting. When we listen to speech, all that we receive is vibrations of the air: the senses of animals receive just the same, but they have not the mind to interpret.

The faculty of interpretation is amazing. By certain ingenious devices we have just learnt how to interpret ether waves into harmony and sense. To confuse our real existence with the instrument is merely stupid.

The very shape of the body depends on nothing material, it does not depend on the nature of the food supplied, as the shape of a crystal does: the

same food could equally well have made a chicken or a pig. There is no personal identity in the particles, or in their aggregation; the personal identity belongs to the soul, the vivifying animating principle which put them together and which allots to each particle its office.

The protoplasmic cell which enters the blood in the course of digestion goes to some part of the tissues and is there arranged according to its locality. In one place it will contribute to a nail, in another to a hair, in another to a muscle or the skin. Wound the skin, it is soon restored; cut a nerve, it heals up again. Marvellous is the process--utterly beyond our conscious power. Who by taking thought could grow a toe-nail, or a tooth, or a hair!

The physics and chemistry of the process can be studied, but the guiding, indwelling, immanent power eludes our ken. All is obedient to law and order; the laws can be formulated, the process observed and described by skilled observers; but that is only the mechanism. So might we study the structure of a bridge, or an engine, or a wireless set,

but the conceiver or designer would not be visible.

To identify the animating power with the material vehicle is to stultify ourselves and to shut our eyes to reality. A violin or an organ is an instrument: but the music requires a musician. We ourselves are not matter, we use matter and discard it; the body is our instrument, it only lasts for a time and then has to be buried or burnt; it has served its turn and its particles may now serve another organism.

We ourselves never enter the tomb; we continue an uninterrupted existence. We may probably have another mode of manifestation—another body in that sense—though no longer made of matter; the old material body is dead and done with, it will never be resuscitated by us. There is no resuscitation of a corpse, once it is completely dead: that would be no glorified resurrection; that would be either a strange inexplicable miracle, or else a mere horror.

Those who have limited themselves to a material view of existence, and closed their eyes to reality, necessarily take a very low and limited view of hu-

man destiny, and think the idea of survival nonsense. If the brain is the mind, if all memory is stored there, if it is not only the instrument for reproducing and manifesting thoughts and ideas, but is the actual human being—a strange notion—then indeed we are feeble ephemeral creatures, living our thousand months and then returning to the dust whence we came. A futile sport, without permanence, without meaning. All our hope and faith and charity, all our joy and sorrow and self-sacrifice, going for nothing, blotted out and ceasing as a tale that is told.

To such theorizers the only notion of survival would be resuscitation of the bodily mechanism, an attempt at which is rightly called necromancy, a dealing with the corpse. There have been times when it was really believed that the graves would yield up their dead, that there would be a general resuscitation, and that our poor discarded worn-out agglomerates of earthly particles would be collected together and be tortured or petted to all eternity. Emancipate yourselves from so gross a superstition.

In contrast to that, what is the truth? The truth

is that we ourselves are not subject to mortality, that we do not decay or wear out, that we have a permanent existence beyond the life of the material fleshly organism which we inherited from the rest of the animal creation; that it is the animating, controlling and dominating spirit which really constitutes *ourselves,* and that this persists apart from the accidents which can happen to the body, subject only to those evils which may assault and hurt the soul. We are able to ascend to heights unspeakable, and to descend to corresponding depths.

The permanent human element is the character —the will. That is what determines man's destiny. We have risen above mechanism, we are not coerced, we do not run in grooves like a tramcar, we are free to direct our course; we sit at the helm and can choose our path. Many of us are content so long as we keep clear of obstacles and spin along the highway, but some can do more than that; they have, as it were, wings: they can soar above the troubles of vulgar life, at least for moments; they can rise into freedom and beauty, they can sing and rejoice and encourage the plodders to share in the

ecstasy and the beauty and majesty of the universe, of which they are beginning to catch more than a fleeting glimpse.

The splendid outlook which lies before each individual, when he is ready to perceive it, can be extended, with differences, as a hope and an inspiration to the future of the human race on this planet. This earth is a region of struggling and aspiring souls, hampered and yet strengthened by their disciplinary association with matter. Man as we know him is a recent product of evolution, he has not yet learnt how to manage wisely his material environment, he is sadly mistaken about the relative importance of things. But inspired writers have assured him that he can work out his own salvation; the seeds of goodwill have been planted, and when they begin to bud and blossom future generations will inherit an earthly paradise worthy of the long labour of preparation and suffering and effort which are its early stages, its embryonic condition. The earth will yet be truly a heavenly body, and the Kingdom of Heaven is within our ultimate grasp.

Man is not fully developed man as yet, when

only a few out-top their fellows; the time will surely come when all will be able to realize their birthright. Much of the present unrest is a groping after higher things, a feeling that this world cannot be all; that education and leisure are objects worth struggling for, that there are prizes beyond the present scope of the average man. Terribly mistaken are some of the efforts: selfishness dogs and damages the ideals; but sooner or later all this can be rectified.

Mankind is barely civilized as yet, we have much leeway to make up; but there is plenty of time. For the individual and also for the race there is a magnificent prospect ahead; and if we set our faces firmly towards the Right, and seek for the guidance which is certainly forthcoming; if we try to ascertain what is really the meaning of existence, and get our wills right with that effort which seems to us divine; then beyond these voices we shall attain to peace and to the service which is perfect freedom.

I speak of help or guidance. That, too, is a reality; it is not forced upon us, but it can be ours if we ask for it. Multitudes have lived and striven on the

earth, and they are not extinct. There is plenty of room in this great universe, in which nothing real goes out of existence. It may go beyond our ken, but it never ceases to be. Even the atoms of matter seem permanent. Every fraction of energy is conserved; there is no destruction: only change. So it has been with all who have lived; and we know how some of them, even while still here, have energized and suffered to help humanity.

Think you they will labour no more, will rest and leave us in neglect and loneliness? Not so! We are not alone; we are only some of the agents who are striving after better conditions. A mighty army is at work; not at the work of destruction, but at the work of regeneration, stimulation, help, and guidance. They have not abandoned the conflict, they are in it still; regarding it now from a higher standpoint, seeing and lamenting our blunders, and ready to lend a helping hand. All doubtless subject to a Higher Power beyond our conception, which yet works by law, and by physical means, and by agents, in ways which we cannot fathom, but can gladly acknowledge. The destiny of the individual de-

pends largely on himself. The destiny of the race depends upon us and upon those who have gone before. We are co-workers together. That happier state which is called the Kingdom of Heaven is the aim and goal; it is to be reached on earth some day. Towards that end immortal powers are working. Unruly wills retard it, greed and strife oppose it; but surely the powers of good are the stronger and in the end will prevail.

This is a wonderful and beautiful earth; this episode of earth-life is plainly of tremendous importance in the scheme. Some day our ideals will be realized, some day humanity will rise nearer to the possibilities which we now begin to see are within its scope. For already mankind has produced Plato and Shakespeare and Newton, like mountain peaks which catch the rising sun before the valleys and the plains; and when the average man has reached this altitude, what will the peaks be then?

THE END

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